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ABSTRACT

Part of a series to introduce the culture of Alaskan Indians to elementary school students, the unit contains student materials related to seasonal Athabascan activities and a guide for classroom teachers to implement the materials. The major theme throughout the unit is the relationship of the Indians with the environment. The teacher's guide, which includes unit themes, activities, student and resource materials, and an annotated bibliography, is presented in five chapters. Lessons one through five: (1) introduce Athabascan culture and environment and investigate activities people might undertake to survive in such an environment; (2) illustrate autumn subsistence activities; (3) describe the story-telling, singing, and dancing which take place during winter settling-in; (4) discuss contact with outside groups through potlatches, war, and trade; and (5) consider canoe building and fishing activities of spring. Each lesson indicates objectives, materials, resources, activities, and background information. Learning activities include map work, literature analysis, class discussion, educational games, drawing and writing exercises, and dramatizations. The student materials include descriptive brochures and newspaper articles on Athabascan environment; tales of Athabascan family, social, spiritual, and hunting life; 16 artifact cards and an accompanying guide; and a book of riddles. (Author/DB)

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Teacher's Manual for

THE ATHABASCAN INDIANS OF INTERIOR ALASKA

Social Studies Unit

for Elementary Grades

Written by

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SO 010 400

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INTRODUCTION TO

THE ATHABASCAN INDIANS OF INTERIOR ALASKA

Social Studies Unit for

Elementary Grades

The Athabascan Indians of Interior Alaska is one in a series of curriculum plans on the Native cultures of Alaska developed by the Alaska Native Education Board at the Alaska Bilingual Education Center, Anchorage. The written materials are prepared for students at the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade reading level, but the program should be adaptable to any elementary or junior high school grade.

The Athabascan Indians of Interior Alaska follows a format common to all the Native studies plans in the Alaska Native Education Board series: It is divided into lessons, each of which deals with the subsistence activities and life-ways appropriate to a certain season. Thus, Lessons I and II deal with fall activities, and ensuing lessons continue with the yearly subsistence cycle by dealing with winter, spring, and summer activities. The unit as a whole can thus be used for an entire school year as a supplement to other social studies materials. It can also, of course, be shortened as your teaching schedule and other commitments dictate.

The Teacher's Manual has been prepared to assist you in using the materials designed for student use. Student Materials consist of 2 posters, 7 booklets, a newspaper, and artifact cards and book.

The basic format of this manual is as follows:

At the beginning of each Lesson appear objectives, a list of the materials provided, a list of materials you should have on hand, and a list of additional resource materials which you can obtain from other sources as supplements to those provided as part of this package.

Following this information, each Lesson contains background information on cultural practices appropriate to the major topic or season to be covered during that Lesson. This is for your information, so that you will be able to answer questions on material not specifically covered in student booklets.

Finally, each Lesson contains suggested activities and discussion topics which can be used to explore the student materials designed for that Lesson. There are many more activities and discussion topics than any one class would want to cover, so it is important that you, the teacher, read each Lesson ahead of time and choose those activities which you feel are most appropriate for your class's and your interest and talents.

A note about the method employed in designing this unit might be helpful. The unit design centers around a basic theme, the relationship of humanity with its environment. In addition, three subthemes are continually re-emphasized: 1) The meaning which people give to their environment (which is related to the environment itself, though not always directly), 2) the changes which have occurred in Athabascan culture through time, and 3) the nature of scientific or anthropological knowledge. With this one theme and the three subthemes in mind, the author searched the available publications on Alaskan Athabascan culture in an attempt to find incidents which illustrate those themes. The student materials represent the product of this search.

Since the materials have been designed for children, some important aspects of Athabascan life have been simplified or left out completely. For instance, the quite complex and poorly understood clan system of interior Athabascans has been mentioned in the Teacher's Manual, but not in the student booklets. Regional differences have also been minimized, both because many of the Athabascan regions have been scantily reported and so materials could not be found on them, and because it was felt that this topic could be best dealt with by each individual school through reference to elders in the local area. The resulting image of Alaskan Athabascan culture is a somewhat generalized pattern of life, the parts of which have been extracted from many different Athabascan areas. Despite the shortcomings inherent in a simplified version of a people's life, we felt that that simplified version would be more likely understood and remembered by the students than would a technically correct but overly complex one.

We invite your comments -- and we hope you find the materials useful!

LIST OF STUDENT MATERIALS FOR ATHABASCAN INDIANS OF INTERIOR ALASKA SOCIAL STUDIES UNIT

Lesson I: Book 1 "A View of the Past" written by Patricia Partnow, illustrated by Michael Jimerson

Book 2 "Tetlin As I Knew It" written by Shirley David Jimerson, illustrated by Michael Jimerson

Resource Map of Tetlin illustrated by Shirley David Jimerson

Lesson II: Northern Chronicle Newspaper

Book 3 "Before the Hunt" written by Patricia Partnow, illustrated by Jeanette Bailey

Lesson III: Upper Tanana House Poster illustrated by Jeanette Bailey

Athabascan Artifact Cards

"Artifact Information Book: A Guide to the Athabascan Artifact Cards" written by Patricia Partnow, illustrated by Jeanette Bailey

Book 4 "Younger Sister and Spider Woman" told by Lucy Adam

Book 5 "When People Meet Animals" written by Patricia Partnow, illustrated by Jeanette Bailey

Lesson IV: Book 6 "Needzeek: The Boy Who Went to the Moon" told by Titus David

Lesson V: Book 7 "Koyukon Riddles" adapted by Richard Dauenhauer

LESSON I: INTRODUCTION TO ATHABASCANS AND THEIR COUNTRY.

OBJECTIVES:

To introduce students to the environment in which Alaskan Athabascans historically lived.

To introduce the concept that the environment has an effect on the way we live.

To introduce the concept that different people sometimes see the same thing in different ways.

To establish the pattern of observation and comparison which students will be asked to use throughout the unit.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

Students should imagine and predict, through pantomime, drawing, writing, or discussion, some of the subsistence activities which Athabascans might have undertaken in order to survive in their environment.

Students should become involved with the environment of interior Alaska through pantomime, drawing, writing, and discussion.

Students should experiment with the concept of "Point of View" by comparing their own different descriptions of similar events, as well as different points of view as demonstrated in some of the writings of this unit.

Students should be able to use the Resource Map of Tetlin to plot travel routes. They should also be able to "read" the symbols on the map.

Students should extend their knowledge of maps to make resource maps of their own area.

MATERIALS PROVIDED AS PART OF THE UNIT

Book 1	"A View of the Past"
Book 2	"Tetlin as I Knew It"

Resource Map of Tetlin

MATERIALS YOU SHOULD HAVE ON HAND

Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska Map, produced by the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

RESOURCE LIST OF RELATED MATERIALS

Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Notebook Series. Contains information on the habitat and life cycle of most Alaskan animals. Obtain from Department of Fish & Game; Subport; Juneau, 99801.

LESSON I: INTRODUCTION TO ATHABASCANS AND THEIR COUNTRY

Background Information

The Adaptation Theme

Interior Alaska has some of the harshest environmental conditions in the world. Its continental climate is a study of extremes -- extreme cold in the winter (it is not unusual for temperatures to be in the -50's) and extreme heat in the summer (often in the 80's). In addition, summer days become exercises in patience and endurance because of the hordes of mosquitoes which abound at that time of year. The land is wooded with spruce, willow, and birch, and is traversed by many river systems.

Athabascan Indians have lived in this environment characterized by forest, rivers, and extreme climate for centuries, their ancestors for thousands of years before. As might be expected, their way of life has incorporated a series of adaptations to the environment, and many aspects of the culture can be traced to these adaptations.

The theme of adaptation will underscore much of the material in this unit, and so it is important that your students understand something of this concept. They should come to see the difference between their present-day life, in which human beings have minimized the effects which the environment has on their lives, and the life of the pre-contact Athabascans, who lived in the environment and were directly affected by it. This first lesson serves as an introduction to the concept of the environment and the effects it has on human behavior.

Introduction to Athabascan Culture

The name "Athabascan" comes from the large lake in Canada called "Lake Athabasca." The lake was given its name by the Cree Indians, who lived east of it. In Cree, "Athabasca" means "grass here and there," and was a descriptive name for the lake. The name was extended to refer to those Indian groups which lived west of the lake. It also refers to the large language family of which all the languages of the Athabascan Indians are a part.

There are eleven different Athabascan languages in Alaska, many others in Canada (see the Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska map), some in California and Oregon, and the Navajo and Apache languages in the Southwestern United States. Within each of the eleven Alaskan Athabascan language groups there are local dialects, and in the past each dialect corresponded with a social and geographical unit called a "regional band," made up of from 30 to 100 nuclear families. (A nuclear family is a unit consisting of parents and their ungrown offspring.) The eleven language groups themselves were not political units, and Athabascans did not recognize membership in any group larger than the regional band (dialect group). Thus, although the language of several regional bands was Ingalik, members of those regional bands did not consider themselves part of the same large group called "Ingalik." The eleven language groups are thus externally observed groups, not groups in the minds of the traditional Athabascan themselves.

Three major principles affected the social groupings of Alaskan Athabascans:

The first principle was pragmatism. Group formation was dependent on the number of people who could most efficiently utilize the resources available. Since different resources required different hunting or gathering techniques, utilizing the efforts of different numbers of people, a person belonged to several different social groupings in any one year.

For instance, summer fish camp often brought an entire regional band together. There were enough fish for all, and often the site for fish camp was the part of the local river system which was most abundant in fish. The entire regional band might also join together for fall caribou hunts, when the cooperation of all members was necessary to repair and man the caribou fence.

In the winter, the regional band might split up into smaller units, called local bands, each one made up of perhaps four nuclear families. Each local band had its own territory within the territory of the rgional band, and engaged in hunting and trapping activities at this time of year.

The regional band might meet again at a predetermined place and time in mid-winter for a gathering-up ceremony or potlatch, and then split up again for beaver and muskrat trapping.

Athabascans thus recognized membership in a regional band (dialect group) as described above, but the more important social unit was the local band. Members of this local band lived together and moved around the territory together.

The second principle which determined social grouping was kinship. Local band members were generally related to each other in some manner, either on the mother's or father's side. Although kinship was determined on both sides, each person also had a more specific identification with relatives in the maternal line. A person belonged to the same "side," "clan" or "sib" as his mother, and all other members of the same sib were relatives of a very special nature. One couldn't marry a member of the same sib (but one could marry members of one's father's sib). In addition, wars and gathering-ups (potlatches) were sib affairs.

Most of the Alaskan Athabascan groups recognized three sibs, and each sib was in some cases divided into smaller named family units. Sibs have not operated in some areas for many years, however, and neither Indians nor anthropologists are aware of the total importance which the sibs had in precontact days. Since the subject is a very complicated and poorly understood one, sibs have not been covered in the student materials prepared for this unit.

The third principle governing Athabascan social grouping was individual choice. Each person was free to choose his local band affiliation within certain bounds. In general, a person was accepted into a band as long as he had relatives in the band. Aside from this limitation, people could choose among several local bands within a regional band. This allowed the local bands to be fluid groups, with individuals changing membership as personality conflicts or availability of game dictated.

Each regional band (and, to some extent, each individual) had its own life-ways, beliefs, and customs. Despite the differences between bands, certain generalizations can be made about Athabascan life. Those things which were common to all the groups were on the one hand the parts of the culture which were most dependent on the environment and were most closely adapted to the environment, and on the other hand were a series of beliefs about the environment which remained fairly constant across the linguistic boundaries.

For instance, Athabascans used every available resource in their food quest. Thus, the general pattern of life was one of fishing in the summer and fall, to take advantage of the salmon runs and schools of whitefish and grayling, with hunting caribou in the fall, trapping water mammals in the spring, and harvesting vegetable foods (roots and berries) in the spring, summer, and fall. The food quest was, of course, much more complicated than that, but the general pattern was very similiar throughout the interior.

Variations occur where the environment is slightly different from the inland wooded riverine environment assumed above. Thus, the groups who lived on Cook Inlet took advantage of the abundant source of sea mammals which was available to them. The Ingalik and Lower Koyukon groups which lived along the Lower Yukon where fish runs were large and regular spent a greater part of their year harvesting fish than did those groups farther inland. Finally, people in groups such as the Chandalar Kutchin, which lived in the foothills of the Brooks Range, spent a larger percentage of their time hunting big game animals like caribou and mountain sheep.

The animistic belief system common to all Alaskan Athabascan groups might be briefly characterized as follows: All creatures, and some inanimate objects, had spirits which were active and powerful components of those creatures. The spirits enabled an animal to know more than was immediately apparent to him. Thus, if human beings did something which displeased the animal spirit, the animal itself would remain aloof from the people, and the people might starve. There were very definite rules which people had to follow in dealing with animals based on this belief in animal spirits. The specific rules differed from area to area, but the general concept was the same throughout.

The belief in animal spirits was actually a logical extension of what the hunters knew about their environment. Thus, when all past experience and logic told a hunter that game should be in a certain area, and it was not there, then the conclusion the hunter drew was that there was a reason for the animal's aloofness. And the reason was, often, that the hunter or a member of his band had broken a taboo and angered the animal's spirit. A subsequent ceremony attempted to conciliate the spirit.

Material culture was also similar throughout Interior Alaska, again with variations depending on the specific environmental conditions of specific areas. The Athabascan Artifact Cards and the "Artifact Information Book" (see Lesson III) illustrate some of the common elements in material culture. The most notable variations from the inland hunting and fishing emphasis displayed by these artifacts occurred among the peripheral Athabascan groups, the Ingalik and Tanaina. The Ingalik, with their heavy reliance on fish, had many more specialized fishing implements than did other groups. The Tanaina, bordered by Eskimos and close to Tlingits, borrowed various elements of material culture from those cultures.

What Topics This Social Studies Unit Will Cover

Most of the above elements of Athabascan culture are brought out in the ensuing unit. For instance, the environment itself and the way the people used the environment (the yearly subsistence cycle), and some of the beliefs about the environment are specifically covered. The changes which have occurred in Athabascan culture during the last two hundred years are also an underlying theme, brought out in the lessons as students are asked to compare and contrast past lifeways with present ones.

Other elements of the culture are not specifically described. The band, for instance, is mentioned but is not described to the students in detail. Rather, it is treated as a given, an element of Athabascan life which is taken for granted. The background information provided above should allow you to fill students in when they have questions concerning the social groupings, or can be the basis of a lecture you might want to give at the appropriate time in the unit.

The unit is designed so that students will learn Athabascan culture in the following progression:

LESSON I	1. Students gain a knowledge of the Athabascan environment.
LESSON I	2. Students predict activities people might undertake to survive in such an environment.

LESSON I, II, III, IV & V	3. Students learn some of the activities which actually did occur, and compare them with predictions. The effects which the environment had on the subsistence activities should be specified.
LESSON I, II, III, IV & V	4. Students learn how people associate with each other (the social groupings). They question how the environment affected the type of association that occurred.
LESSON II, III	5. Students learn some of the attitudes the people had about their environment.
LESSON II, III, IV & V	6. Students explore the ways in which attitudes toward the environment have changed since Contact with European culture, how the change in attitudes has affected a change in actions, and how the changes in actions have affected the way they associate with people today.

SUGGESTION FOR USING

Book 1, "A View of the Past"

This booklet is designed to allow students a brief view of a group of Interior Athabascans. While students should not be expected to remember all the details in the booklet, it is hoped that it will allow them to see some Athabascans as they might have lived 200 years ago -- and hence give some concrete meaning to the term "Athabascan" which they will hear so often from now on.

This book is told from an outsider's perspective, as if the author were hidden in the bushes across the river from the camp. It contains a visual description of the people's activities without describing the meanings behind the actions. It is, thus, the sort of observation a newcomer to the Athabascan camp might make before he had become acquainted with the people and their culture.

Some activities and discussion topics which could follow the reading of the booklet are:

1. Locate Athabascan areas on a map of Alaska. Discuss with the class the meaning of the term "Athabascan" (see discussion section of this Lesson, above). Identify other non-Alaskan Athabascan groups in North

America.

2. Discuss: Why will the people in "A View of the Past" move away from this camp later on in the winter? What do you think would happen if they stayed here all year?

3. Discuss the make-up of your students' households. How are they different from or similar to those described in "A View of the Past"? How might the children of two Athabascan families that lived together have treated each other? Do your students' parents have friends or partners they might have lived with, had they lived 200 years ago in Interior Alaska? Imagine what it would be like to live with another family. Write a story about it.

4. The story states, "Relatives and good friends . . . have decided to stay at the same camp this winter."

Discuss why the Athabascans chose this place to live, what resources they feel it was important to be near.

Then discuss why your students chose to live where they do, and the resources which they are near in their homes. Examples of resources your students' families may have chosen to be near are 1) father's or mother's office, 2) school, 3) fishing stream, 4) stores, 5) highway, 6) fresh air, etc.

Now compare the two sets of resources: those which pre-contact Athabascans chose to live near and those which your students' parents chose to live near. Discuss the two lists.

5. Discuss the perspective, or point of view, which the author has taken in writing this book. Then have students use their imaginations to go beyond the descriptive statements in the book. For instance, they might draw their concepts of the interior of the house; or write about living in a moss-covered house; or discuss what the men might be laughing about, what the woman and the fisherman are thinking about as they go about their tasks. In other words, have students invest the story with meaning. Talk about the differences meaning makes in the story.

6. You might extend this discussion to cover the students' own lives, by playing a charade-like game:

Students describe or act out common activities, but without the props which would give other students clues about what they are doing. Other students guess the action and its meaning: Why is it being performed, what the actor thinks about his task, etc. For instance, in portraying "taking out the trash," a student might write,

"I walk from room to room, looking for little containers which are full of colorful and varied bits of paper, pens, smaller containers, sometimes magazines: all sorts of things. I gather up the container, and carry it into the garage. There I put all the objects together into one very large container, and carefully place a lid on the large container."

Once descriptions or dramatizations have been completed, have students invest their actions with meanings. First give them meanings which people who are unfamiliar with the situation might give them. Then describe actual meanings as intended by the author or actor. The example above might have some of the following meanings attached to it:

a. The bits of paper have been used and cannot be used again.

b. Some of the containers, called trash cans, have smelly contents.

c. I don't like to do this. I'd rather be out playing, but my mother says I have to.

d. Trash has to be removed from the house because it is undesirable. It is not "gathered together" as one would with toys in a toy box, though the actions as described above might be very similar to those of putting toys and favorite objects together.

7. Another activity which can be used to demonstrate to students the concept of "point of view" is as follows:

Have students write descriptions of a recent vivid occurrence in your town. Or, have them write descriptions of your town, or a small part of your town. Compare the different descriptions.

Discuss: Why did different people single out different aspects of the occurrence or different parts of the town to emphasize in their descriptions? Is there any one right way of describing the occurrence or your town?

Next, review "A View of the Past" with this focus. Where do you think the author of the booklet was standing when she described the scene? Did she miss anything in her description? How might a description by one of the inhabitants of the settlement have been different from the one in the book? Have students write such an imaginary description.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING
Book 2, "Tetlin As I Knew It," Chapter I and Resource Map of Tetlin

Chapter I of "Tetlin As I Knew It" provides a detailed description of one portion of the Alaskan Athabascan environment -- the area around Tetlin, traditionally inhabited by Upper Tanana Athabascans. The book was written by Shirley Jimerson, who grew up in the area. It provides a good contrast with the preceding booklet in its point of view. Ms. Jimerson presents an insider's perspective of an Athabascan area rather than the more removed historical view which students obtained in "A View of the Past."

The following list of suggested activities or discussion topics is designed to sensitize your students to the environment of that one Athabascan group (Upper Tanana), as well as to their own environment.

Use the book in conjunction with the Resource Map of Tetlin to follow the author's travels as she describes her area, and to predict what sorts of subsistence activities people might undertake in the area.

1. Read Chapter I of "Tetlin As I Knew It" aloud to your students. Instruct them to sit quietly, perhaps with their eyes closed or the lights off as they imagine the scenes in the book.

2. Then have the students draw some of the scenes from the book before they see the illustrations, as an exercise in listening and interpreting the spoken word.

3. Follow on the Resource Map Ms. Jimerson's travels as she moves through the Tetlin area. You might want to mark on the map those areas which she specifically mentions, such as Bear Creek, Rock Hill, Tetlin Village, etc.

4. Discuss: Why is Tetlin Village located where it is? Discuss this in terms of the resources available at that location, as in previous discussions. Possible resources: fresh water; food; trees for houses and fuel. Remember also the advantage of choosing a site on a slight rise, to take advantage of temperature inversion.

5. Take the class for a walk outside. Instruct the students to be observant of everything

they see in their environment. When you return to class, have each student write a description of the environment as he or she saw it, as if he were telling a stranger to the area about his home town.

For younger students, follow up the field trip with a "language experience" activity which would include class discussion of the walk, followed by individual student illustrations, with the teacher writing student-dictated captions. Put them together into a "reading" booklet for the entire class.

Or, use a Polaroid camera to take pictures of your area. Discuss the pictures in class after the walk. How has your environment changed from long ago? And so forth. You might have the students draw "then and now" pictures.

6. Have students write a story about their experiences with one of the animals mentioned in "Tetlin As I Knew It". Or, assign an animal (preferably one of those mentioned in the book) to each student to observe, study and write about. What animals other than those mentioned in the book live in the Tetlin area?

7. Have the students write (or draw) about an experience when their natural environment would not allow them to do something they wanted to -- or necessitated that they do something they did not want to do.

8. If you live in an area other than interior Alaska, have students make a list of the possibilities their environment allows them to explore. For instance, a nearby salmon stream allows for good fishing; long summer days allow for lots of hiking and berry picking; lots of lakes make it easy to canoe far distances.

Next, have students make a list of the necessities their environment imposes on them. For instance, cold winters necessitate that they have warm houses and clothing; lots of marshland means they can't walk far on land in summer but must rely on a canoe instead; and so forth.

After eliciting similar lists about the environment of the Tetlin area, compare the two. How would the differences between your hometown's environment and Tetlin's environment have made life different in the two places two hundred years ago? How do they make life different today?

9. Have two groups of students make dioramas or salt maps, one of your local area, one of the Tetlin area, for comparison and contrast.

10. Have the class speculate on how the people who lived in the Tetlin area utilized their environment. For instance, what might the people who lived in Tetlin have used for food? How could they have obtained it? What materials would they have used for building houses? And so forth. In later lessons students will learn the ways in which Tetlin people actually did utilize their environment. Make a list of predictions students make now to compare with the actual utilization of the area.

11. Chapter I of "Tetlin As I Knew It" describes the Tetlin area in the summer. Have students write descriptions of what they think Tetlin would be like in the winter. How would one be likely to live? What would one eat? And so forth.

12. Have students write about an imaginary trip along one of the trails that branches out from Tetlin Village. They could use the Resource Map to help. How do they travel? What is the land like? What animals do they see? What animals

do they not see which might be in the area anyway? Students could illustrate as well as write the imaginary journeys.

13. Use the Resource Map of Tetlin to identify the various resources available in the Tetlin area. Discuss with the class how one might most efficiently make use of those resources. Factors to consider include:

How far must a person travel to utilize the resource? How would one travel to the resource area, and how long would it take to get there?

How long should a person stay in any one place?

What times of year are the various resources available? Students might need to do some research on the plants and animals in Tetlin. Note that this was all information which an Athabascan had to know in order to survive in the past.

Where would the various camps be located?

How many people should travel together?

What gear should they take with them, and what should they plan to obtain on site?

What would happen if a person stayed in one place in the Tetlin area all year?

What would happen if one of the resources failed to materialize (if, for instance, the whitefish run were very small)?

And so forth. In this way, decide how to utilize the resources of the area.

The same topic could be explored in a variety of different ways: For instance, groups of students could research the different resources and report on how they would be harvested, then a composite picture of life in Tetlin could be made, based on individual reports.

14. Make a resource map of your own area showing only natural, no man-made resources. Discuss how you would survive in your area if only those resources were available. Discuss what man-made artifacts your students would construct in their natural environment to facilitate use of the natural resources. Students might feel they needed to construct an ax of some sort, for instance, in order to chop down trees to build shelter.

Then compare resources in your area with those depicted on the Resource Map of Tetlin.

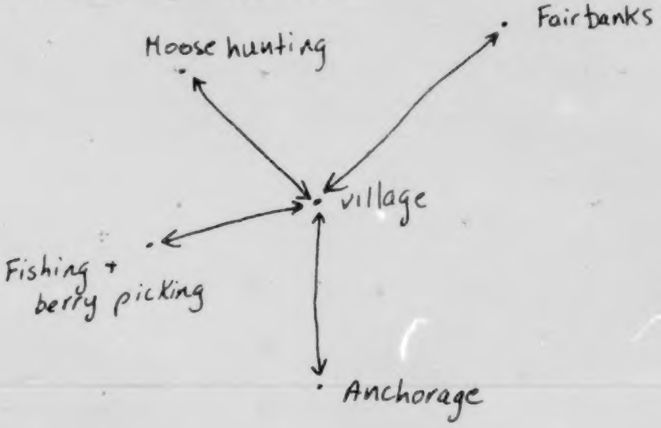
15. In order to take advantage of the resources available in the Tetlin area, a family had to travel to as many as four different camps during the course of a year. How would their lives change if there were a year-round supply of salmon in the river? (Consider several factors: How often they would have to move, what kinds of houses they would build, what kinds of tools they would make, etc.)

16. Make a resource map of your area showing man-made as well as natural resources. Compare it with the natural resources map described in #14 above. Discuss how you survive in your area today, and how it would be different if there were no man-made resources. What happens to your ability to survive if you stay in one place all year round? Why? How have man-made resources affected the number and kinds of natural resources in your area?

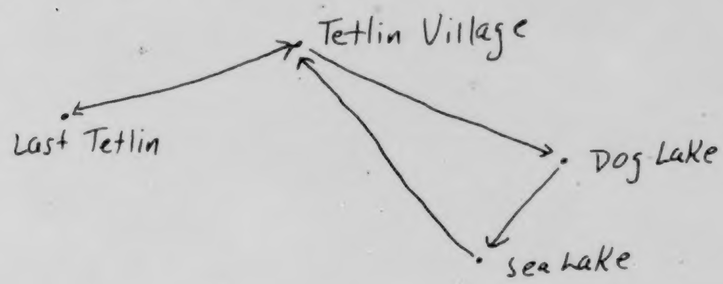
17. Using the resources map of your area described in #16 above, have students plot their travels. It might work best to have each student plot his travels on a separate map. This

would allow for valid comparisons with Ms. Jimerson's travels.

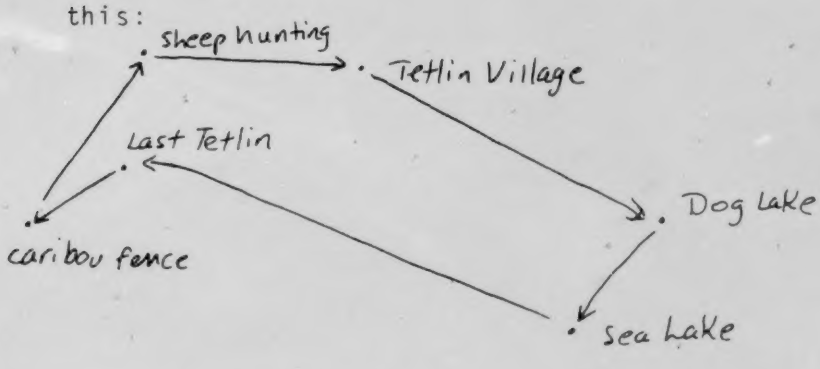
For instance, make a single line for each trip made by each student from one point to another. Trips within the village should not be marked on this map (but might be marked on a separate map which shows a blow-up of the village area). Thus, each time a student makes a trip out of town, he should mark that trip on his map. At the end of the semester or year, take a look at your class's seasonal activity maps and determine what activity patterns have been established. Many maps made in Alaskan villages might look something like this:



At the same time, use the Resource Map of Tetlin to plot Ms. Jimerson's seasonal movements, which will be told in succeeding chapters of her book, "Tetlin As I Knew It." At the end of the unit, after you have read all five chapters from the book, determine her activity patterns. Compare and contrast it with your students' map. The map of Tetlin might look something like this:


Tetlin Village
Last Tetlin
Dog Lake
Sea Lake

In the days before Tetlin became a permanent economic and educational center, the movement pattern was probably more circular, with fewer returns to Tetlin after each seasonal activity had passed. It was only after compulsory schooling had come that the trips for hunting and fishing radiated out from the village. A pre-contact pattern of Tetlin area might look something like this:


sheep hunting
Tetlin Village
Last Tetlin
Dog Lake
caribou fence
Sea Lake

LESSON II: AUTUMN: THE YEARLY CYCLE BEGINS

OBJECTIVES:

To give students an idea of some autumn subsistence activities.

To reiterate the concept of "Point of View" in descriptions of a people's way of life.

To introduce the concepts of change and continuity through time.

To reinforce skills in objective comparisons.

To introduce the spiritual element of Athabascan life through descriptions of the medicine man and his effect on subsistence activities.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

Students should make a study of some aspect of the Athabascans' dependence on caribou: through research, model-building, story-writing, pantomime, or displays.

Students should compare traditional subsistence activities with more modern ones through displays, discussions, and interviews.

Students should study attitudes and spiritual components of traditional subsistence activities.

MATERIALS PROVIDED AS PART OF THE UNIT:

Northern Chronicle Newspaper excerpt
Book 3, "Before the Hunt"
Book 2, "Tetlin As I Knew It," Chapter II
Resource Map of Tetlin

MATERIALS YOU SHOULD HAVE ON HAND:

Art supplies for model-making.

RESOURCE LIST OF RELATED MATERIALS:

Books: Osip, Anna Mae, Tanning Moosehide and Making Babiche and Rawmane.

Spencer and Jennings, et.al., The Native Americans, page 13 for a description of dendrochronology, "tree ring dating."

Films: Caribou Hunters - The Cree and Chippewa Indians of Northern Manitoba and their search for caribou, their main source of food.
Obtain from the National Film Board of Canada; 16th Floor; 1251 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020.

Videocassettes:

Moose Hide Tanning. Obtain from Tanana Survival School; Tanana Chiefs, Inc.; 102 Lacey St., Fairbanks 99701.

Educational Games:

Caribou Hunting with Bow and Arrow
Caribou Hunting at a Crossing Place
These two games were developed as part of the Man: A Course of Studies program. Although they were designed to portray Netsilik Eskimo caribou hunting techniques, the techniques are similar enough to traditional Athabascan methods to make the games applicable to this lesson.
Obtain from Curriculum Development Associates, Inc.; Suite 414; 1211 Connecticut Avenue; Washington, D.C. 20036.

Multimedia Kits:

Athabascan Caribou Hunt Kit - a simulated caribou hunt in Kutchin territory.
Obtain from the Alaska Multimedia Education Program; Alaska State Museum; Pouch FM; Juneau 99801.

LESSON II: AUTUMN - THE YEARLY CYCLE BEGINS

Background Information

This unit emphasizes both the specific types of activities which took place in Athabascan territory and the fact that movement from place to place was an essential part of the lives of most Alaskan Athabascans. The local band was generally the social unit which stayed together in the travels for food.

The following excerpt from Olson's Master's Thesis (1968:41) describes the yearly movements of one group, the Minto Lower Tanana:

> There was a regular pattern to the hunting and fishing migrations which demanded that the people be on the move almost continually throughout the year. They had to travel in small bands. Late in the fall, men who controlled the moose or caribou fence would gather their friends and relatives and set out for the small encampment near the fence. This is where the log houses were located. They would remain in this camp until mid-December or January. If there was to be a potlatch, they would travel to a central point where they would meet others for the celebration. If any were going down the Kuskokwim, they would start in January and return about three months [sic] later. Later on in January, they would be back out in small bands

> searching for caribou or moose, and trapping smaller animals and birds until late in the spring. In the warm weather, they would move to the lakes before break-up to trap beaver and muskrats. As summer approached they moved to their fish camps on the small rivers where they fished and hunted water fowl until the fall.

The materials designed for use with this lesson, Northern Chronicle, "Before the Hunt," and Chapter II of "Tetlin As I Knew It," look at the specific falltime activities of Alaskan Athabascans at two different points in time. Pre-contact practices are described in Northern Chronicle and "Before the Hunt," while more modern practices are described in "Tetlin As I Knew It."

Northern Chronicle offers an additional perspective, in that the description of pre-contact practices is so obviously filtered through the eyes of present-day scientists and newspaper reporters. This filtering raises a set of questions about scientific knowledge. For instance, how did the scientists know how a caribou fence worked? How did they determine the age of the fences? What things might they not know about pre-contact practices? And so forth.

"Before the Hunt" adds that dimension alluded to in the previous lesson, the meaning which the hunters attached to the hunt, and some of the emotions which surrounded it.

Chapter II of "Tetlin As I Knew It" contrasts with the above two publications in that its description of Athabascan life refers to a time period of about twenty years ago. These were days long after contract with Anglo culture and goods had been established, long after a money economy had superceded the subsistence economy and allowed nuclear families to be independent of the local band. Hunting and fishing were still important, but the patterns of association and some of the reasons for hunting had changed.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING

Northern Chronicle: "Scientist Discover Caribou Surrounds":

The newsprint page contains several different articles and a crossword puzzle, and you may use them as you wish. The important article for this lesson is the headline, "Scientists Discover Caribou Surrounds." The following discussion topics and activity suggestions might be used as guides in working with this article.

Topic I: What Does the Story Teach Us About Scientists?

Discuss:

1. How did the scientists know what the fences had been used for?

2. How did the scientists know how old the fences were? (Note: They used the process of dendrochronology, "tree ring dating," in which tree rings from the pieces of wood used in the fence are matched with tree rings from living trees in the area. Each ring marks the passage of one year and the size of each year's ring is dependent on the amount of rain that fell that year. A record of wet and dry years is thus evident in tree rings,

and a pattern based on this record can be compared from one tree to another. Thus, the date when the tree used in making a fence piece was cut down can be computed by matching the pattern its rings make with that of a living tree. See Spencer and Jennings, The Native Americans, page 13 for a more detailed description of the process).

3. Once a scientist found a caribou fence, how would he go about learning how it was used?

Topic II: What Does the Article Teach Us About Athabascan History?

1. How did the Athabascans know where to build their surround? What did they have to know about caribou to be able to do this?

2. Why were the surrounds pointing in the direction of the autumn, rather than the spring migrations? You might have to do some research on caribou habits to learn this. Possible answers might be that caribou fur is in better condition in the fall, caribou meat is fatter then, migrations are more orderly and predictable in the fall, etc.

3. How did the Athabascans cut down the wood

for the fences? What tools did they use? What were the snares inside the surround made of?

4. Build a model surround, placing the fence, men, women, children, cairns (stone piles designed to look like men to the near-sighted caribou), and snares in their proper positions. Or, build parts of an actual-size fence outside, perhaps with the help of an old-timer or books. (McKennan's The Chandalar Kutchin contains a photograph of an old caribou fence post.)

5. If there are caribou fences in your area, go on a field trip to look at them. Determine where the caribou were coming from, and why they were using that particular place as a migration route.

6. Explore the question: What items in traditional Athabascan life were made of caribou by-products? Visit museums, conduct research in library books, use the "Artifact Information Book," interview old-timers, and speculate on the different uses a caribou might be put toward.

Make a list of those objects. Then discuss: What materials serve the same purposes today? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the old vs.

the new materials? Bring items made of caribou in from home and make a classroom display of caribou-related objects.

7. A single hunt could yield as many as 400 caribou, according to the Northern Chronicle. This kill was split among all the members of the regional band (30 to 100 people). How does this yield compare with hunting caribou singly with bow and arrow? With a gun? If your students have experience with caribou hunting, have them compute how long such a kill would last the members of the band.

8. If they are available, use Caribou Hunting with Bow and Arrow, Caribou Hunting at a Crossing Place, and Athabascan Caribou Hunt kit to illustrate traditional methods of hunting caribou (see Resource List of Related Materials at the beginning of this Lesson).

Topic III: How Have Things Changed Since the Days of the Caribou Surround?

1. Have one of the students research present methods of taking caribou in your area; or invite an adult who hunts caribou to talk to your class

about hunting the animals. What does the hunter have to know about the animal to be successful?

Afterwards, discuss how hunting methods have changed since the years of the caribou surround.

2. The newspaper article states that guns marked the end of the use of the caribou surround. Why? What other changes might guns have made in Athabascan life (for instance in the cooperation between people)?

3. ANSWER TO CARIBOU CROSSWORD:

1 B	2 A	R	R	E	N	G	R	O	U	3 N	D	
	L									E		
4 C	A	L	5 F							C		6 S
	S		E			7 C	O	8 W		K		N
	K		E			A		O				A
	9 A	10 N	T	L	E	R		L				R
		O				I		11 F	E	N	C	E
12 M	O	S	S			B						
		E		13 W	O	O	D	L	A	N	14 D	
				I		U					E	
				L			15 L	I	C	H	E	N
	16 H	E	R	D							R	

SUGGESTION FOR USING

Book 3, "Before the Hunt"

You may want to read this booklet to the students, have them read the booklet as part of a reading lesson, or simply assign it to them as homework. One point of information: "Gwich'in," used in the booklet, is the phonetic spelling of "Kutchin." The following activity and discussion suggestions may be useful to you:

1. Study caribou migrations, reasons for the animals' movement, and other pertinent biological information about caribou which might make this story more meaningful to your students.

2. Why did the adults in the story ask the medicine man for help? What did they think he would be able to do for the hunt?

3. Why were the adults worried about the outcome of the caribou hunt? Have students write a poem (not necessarily a rhyming one!) which expresses the feelings of one of the Gwich'in about caribou. Students could write separate poems to express the men's, women's, and children's

feelings about caribou and the hunt. Then discuss: Why would different people feel differently about the same caribou hunt?

4. Why did the medicine man's performance reassure the people about the hunt?

5. Have students write songs which the medicine man might sing as he performs.

6. Discuss: Do you think the Gwich'in people had a good hunt in the end? Why or why not? What might have happened to the medicine man if the hunt were not successful? Have students write or draw an ending to the story, describing the outcome of the hunt.

7. Discuss the medicine man and his role in the group, or have students write about him. Topics to consider: How do you think the people treated him when he was not performing? Do you think he was a good hunter? What would happen to a man in traditional Athabascan times if he were not a good hunter?

SUGGESTION FOR USING

Book 2, "Tetlin As I Knew It," Chapter II

After reading about some traditional Athabascan activities, return to a description of some more contemporary practices as described in Chapter II of "Tetlin As I Knew It." Encourage students to relate this chapter not only with traditional activities, but also with Chapter I of the book which they read in Lesson I.

Some discussion and activity suggestions follow:

1. Follow on the Resource Map of Tetlin the routes Ms. Jimerson and her family took during the fall.

2. Have students estimate the years in which the activities Ms. Jimerson describes might have taken place. Have them search for clues in the chapter which give away the time. (An example is the use of a truck in traveling to caribou country.)

3. Compare the falltime activities described in this chapter with your own falltime activities.

To what extent do they differ? Why do they differ? To what extent are they similar?

4. Compare the methods of hunting caribou which Ms. Jimerson's father used with those described in Northern Chronicle and "Before the Hunt". Why are they different? In the old days, what would people have done if the caribou herds had moved from the Last Tetlin area where the caribou fence was located to the Mt. Fairplay area?

5. What did the author mean when she wrote, "Fall was . . . the start of another yearly cycle"? Why must her family be sure to fish, hunt, and pick berries at that time of year? Are there things your family has to do in the fall to get ready for the winter? What would happen if you did not do them?

6. Write a story about what might happen if a family did not take care of its falltime chores.

7. In Ms. Jimerson's description of Tetlin life, men had certain jobs and women had other jobs. Children sometimes helped. Make a list of men's, women's, and children's jobs in your town. Compare and contrast your list with the descrip-

tions of Tetlin division of labor.

8. Chapter II of "Tetlin As I Knew It" makes no mention of a medicine man, unlike "Before the Hunt". Discuss why the medicine man did not play a part in Ms. Jimerson's life.

LESSON III: WINTER TIME-SETTLING IN FOR AWHILE

OBJECTIVES

To provide information on the material culture of Alaskan Athabascans.

To elaborate on the Athabascans' relationship with their environment -- both the material and the spiritual relationship.

To introduce students to a different mode of education -- the didactic story, as told in traditional Athabascan manner.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Students should build a model of a traditional Athabascan artifact or structure.

Students should examine Athabascan material culture in relation to the environmental setting in which it occurred.

Students should demonstrate an understanding of traditional attitudes about animals through drama, drawing, writing, or discussion.

MATERIALS PROVIDED AS PART OF THE UNIT

Upper Tanana House Poster

Athabascan Artifact Cards

"Artifact Information Book"

Book 4, "Younger Sister and Spider Woman"

Book 5, "When People Meet Animals"

Book 2, "Tetlin As I Knew It," Chapter III

Resource Map of Tetlin

MATERIALS YOU SHOULD HAVE ON HAND

Any Athabascan artifacts you have on hand.

Art supplies for making models of traditional implements.

RESOURCE LIST OF RELATED MATERIALS

Books:

Henry, Chief, Koyukon River Stories

Lynch, Kathleen, Making Snowshoes

Mishler, Craig (collector), Kutchin Tales

Osgood, Cornelius, Ingalik Material Culture

Pitts, Roger S., The Changing Settlement Patterns and Housing Types of the Upper Tanana Indians

Vaudrin, Bill, Tanaina Tales From Alaska

Films:

Athabascan Art - Where Two Rivers Meet - Shows how the old and new merge to form a distinctive art style.
Obtain from University of Alaska Film Library, Fairbanks.

Shelter - Compares igloos, desert tents, and island huts to show that climatic conditions determine the type of shelter people build. Contrasts a pioneer's log cabin with a modern home to illustrate how construction techniques reflect a history of living conditions.
Obtain from Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation; 2494 Teagarden St.; San Leandro, California 94577.

Filmstrips:

Indian Snowshoes - Follows the steps taken by an Indian craftsman as he shapes the frame and weaves the webbing for new snowshoes.
#937030 from Canadian Division; National Film Board of Canada; P.O. Box 6100; Montreal 3, Quebec, CANADA.

Songs and Legends:

Alaska Native Oral Literature Project - a collection of audio-cassette tapes of stories told in English and several Athabascan languages.
Obtain from PERCY (SOS) or one of the following

libraries:
Alaska State Library; Pouch G; Juneau.
Fairbanks North Star Borough Library, 901 First Avenue, Fairbanks.
Anchorage Higher Education Consortium Library; 3211 Providence Drive, Anchorage.

Kutchin Music. Peter Charlie, fiddler. Craig Mishler (ed.). Folkways Records and Service Corporation; 33 1/3 rpm.
This record features Peter Charlie, an Athabascan Indian from Fort Yukon, playing fiddle music. Notes by Craig Mishler accompany the record.
Obtain from Gwitche Zhee Corporation Store; Fort Yukon, Alaska.

Exhibits:

Athapaskan Beadwork - Examples of Athapaskan beadwork from the late 19th century to the present day from the Yukon Territory are illustrated in a series of color photographs. Traveling museum kit.
Obtain from University of Alaska Museum, Fairbanks.

LESSON III: WINTER TIME-SETTLING IN FOR AWHILE

Background Information

For Alaskan Athabascans, mid-winter meant a slowing down of activity and a temporary settling down for a few months. Each local band generally settled down down at a site near the river, but set back into the woods a bit and up on a rise where temperatures are usually a little warmer than they are in hollows. The winter camp was often in the locale of the caribou fence that the band used and was inhabited from the time of the hunt until January or February, when days were longer and warmer and families moved out to hunting camps. Exceptions to this general pattern were the Ingalik and Tanaina groups, whose regional bands inhabited their winter villages for the greater part of the year, departing in summer for fish camps.

Winter camp was made up of several households, and although the exact house plan and building materials varied from area to area, the winter houses of many Athabascan groups were similar. They were semi-subterranean structures made of a wood frame covered by birch or spruce bark, which was itself covered by moss, and topped with dirt. All that was visible of the houses from ground level were mounds of snow with smoke curling out of the centers. The poster provided with this lesson shows an artist's reconstruction of what the inside of one of these houses (an Upper Tanana model) might have looked like.

The most obvious variations from this type of winter house appeared in the Cook Inlet Tanaina and Ingalik areas. Tanaina winter houses were also semi-subterranean, but they were larger than the interior Athabascan houses, and housed several families. Also, the outsides of Tanaina houses were composed of wood boards chinked with moss between the boards and then thatched with grass, rather than the bark/moss/dirt combination described above. They were called "barabaras" by the Russians, and that name has since been adopted to identify Tanaina houses.

Ingalik homes were also semi-subterranean, though they were built on a model which closely resembled Eskimo winter houses more than the "typical" Athabascan model described above. Eskimo influence was also evident in that Ingalik villages contained kashims, or large men's houses, used as men's sleeping quarters and workrooms and as ceremonial centers.

The semi-subterranean house plan used by most Alaskan Native groups in winter is excellent for retaining heat, as there is little surface area through which heat can escape, and cold winds cannot penetrate the structure. In addition, the many layers of insulation used on Interior Athabascan winter houses kept the inside quite warm.

The make-up of an Athabascan household was variable, even within a single band. An extremely charismatic leader, who was usually a good hunter as well, might house several families in his home. Other households might hold two nuclear families as described in "A View of the Past," or might hold an extended family consisting of a man and woman, their young children, a sibling or two, and their aged parents. Again the exception is the Tanaina household, which contained several nuclear families. In almost all cases, more than one set of adults lived in a single house. This had implications for child-rearing, since any children in the house benefited from having a variety of role-models and protectors, as well as potential step-parents should their own parents die. It also meant that there was little individual privacy inside. It might be noted that the concept of individual privacy as Anglo culture knows it is a recent innovation in the history of humanity.

Life in the winter camp was a bit more slow-moving than life during the rest of the year. Extreme cold, sometimes below -40°, prohibited extended trips for weeks at a time. Some food-gathering activity still took place; for instance, snares were put out all around the camp, deadfalls were set to catch larger game, and men went out on short hunting trips for a couple of days at a time. Still, most of the local band was in camp at any one time during the dead of winter.

Favorite activities during the winter were story-telling, singing, and dancing. Not only were old legends, humorous hunting stories, and myths told, but children were also given instruction in proper modes of behavior. Many Athabascan stories contain morals which were made quite explicit to children.

Winter was also the time for the annual Gathering-Up festivals, lately called potlatches after the somewhat similar affairs which were held along the Northwest Coast. Neighboring bands were invited in mid-winter for one or two weeks of feasting, dancing, and singing. The Gathering-Ups were given in honor of a deceased sib member, and presents were given away in his memory. The festivals also served to enhance the prestige of the persons who hosted them. In addition, social and kinship relationships were sometimes established by the arranging of marriages between members of different regional bands. Trade relationships were also sometimes established at Gathering-Ups when men from different regional bands decided to become trading partners.

As with other elements of Athabascan culture, there were regional variations in the form and function of the winter potlatches. For instance, Lower Koyukon Athabascans at Nulato held a Stick Dance, a ceremony which no other group has.

No special materials have been included in the unit as aids for teaching about Gathering-Ups, because of the great regional diversity which obtained in this activity. If you wish to examine this part of the culture in depth, you might want to ask local experts for information on your own village's potlatch customs. The materials which are provided as aids for use with this Lesson are listed on the following pages.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING:

Upper Tanana House Poster and "Artifact Information Book"

The large poster provides an artist's interpretation of what a traditional Upper Tanana bark/moss house was like, based on scholarly descriptions from a variety of sources (see the bibliography). The poster should allow students to observe the house and focus on various objects inside it. Students should be able to predict fairly well what activities took place in the wintertime, based on what they observe in the poster.

The "Artifact Information Book" can be used for a variety of purposes, among them to provide information on some of the objects shown on the poster. Discussion topics and activity suggestions for use of these two components follow.

1. Look at the poster. Have students identify as many of the objects depicted on the poster as they can.

2. Use the "Artifact Information Book" to provide information on each of the artifacts depicted on the poster. Compare the materials used

in making both the house and the artifacts with those students use in their own homes. Determine where the materials came from in the past; today. How did materials relate to the natural environment in the past; today? Why is there a greater variety of materials available today than there was two hundred years ago?

3. Have students write about their own homes; what they like about them, what they dislike about them; how many people live in the house, etc.

Or, have them draw poster-size drawings of their own homes. Compare these with the Upper Tanana House poster.

4. Build a model of this Upper Tanana house, using the correct materials if possible. Place models of people in the house. Where is the women's area? The men's area? Where would summertime tools and implements be stored during the winter?

5. Turn your classroom into an Upper Tanana house, using masking tape, desks, blankets, whatever you like to simulate the house. Mark off the different areas of the house. Read "Younger Sister and Spider Woman" to the students as they sit inside the "house".

6. Using a felt board and cut-outs or paper cut-outs placed on the poster, place people in the Upper Tanana house. Have the class decide who lives in the house and why they choose to live in that household. Decide where each person would sleep, where he or she would store personal belongings.

Then discuss the amount of space allocated to each person in this traditional house. Was it less space then your students are used to having? What differences in the living situation might result from so many people living in such a comparatively small house?

7. Talk about the construction of this house and how it relates to the natural environment in terms of the following:

The materials used in house construction.

How efficiently the house keeps people warm in winter.

How long it takes to build the house.

How long the house will last.

8. Talk about Gathering-Ups. Have the students find out what types of potlatches used to take place in their area. Invite an adult to come

to teach the students some songs or dances, or play the Kutchin Music record album in class (see the Resource List of Related Materials at beginning of this lesson).

If potlatches, Gathering-Ups, or ceremonies like the Stick Dance are still regular occurrences in your village, have students report on these festivals. Discuss what elements of the festival might be modern innovations, which elements are probably traditional.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING
Athabascan Artifact Cards and "Artifact Information Book"

The Athabascan Artifact Cards contain illustrations of some of the artifacts which were traditionally important in the lives of Alaskan Athabascans. The "Artifact Information Book" duplicates these illustrations and also provides information on the items pictured. The cards and the book can be used throughout the unit on Athabascan culture as a resource for students.

Some specific uses for the cards and booklet follow.

1. Dividing students into small groups, give each group a few of the cards. The group must then decide how to divide those cards so that each student becomes involved in researching at least one artifact. Students could work in pairs.

After students have researched the cards with the help of the "Artifact Information Book" and any other ANEB booklets which contain pertinent information (eg., Northern Chronicle mentions one use of snares), they should demonstrate an understanding of what the artifact was used for, how it was made, how it relates to the environment, and how it modifies the environment. They might do this by drawing or writing about the artifact, demonstrating its use to the rest of the class, and so forth. Each artifact should be analyzed with the question in mind: "What does this artifact tell me about Athabascan life?"

2. Make models of the implements depicted on the Athabascan Artifact Cards.

3. Make Hudson's Bay (Labrador) tea or other hot broth using the stone boiling method described in the "Artifact Information Book."

4. Visit a museum to see some of the actual objects depicted on the flash cards.

5. Make additional cards for objects which old-timers in your village might have available. Students could be assigned to be reporters in the village and gather such information, or you could invite adults into the classroom to explain the ways some of their tools work.

6. Write stories or draw cartoons using the artifacts and other information from the unit. For instance, one student might do a story on "One

Day in the Life of an Athabascan Woman," or "How I got my Dentalium Necklace."

7. Compare traditional Athabascan tools with modern-day tools which serve the same purpose. You might want to make a second series of cards based on modern technology. Or, set up an exhibit in your classroom showing old and new objects (students will have to bring items in from home for purposes of the exhibit).

8. Have students divide the artifacts into categories (for example, Food Preparation), and research that category thoroughly. Students might write a report or story on traditional methods of food preparation, based on information provided in the "Artifact Information Book," or they might research present-day implements used in the same process and compare these objects with older ones. Have the class establish criteria for comparison between traditional and contemporary implements. Examples might be:

How long did it take to make the object?
How many people worked on making the object?
How fast can the job be done using the object?

How many times can the object be used before a new one has to be made?

Where did the materials for the object come from, and how were they obtained?

Who used the object?

Where is the object used?

How many similar objects are there that serve basically the same purpose? (Eg., to start fires we use matches, lighters of many descriptions, flints.)

9. Instruct students to be on the lookout for reference to the objects shown on the Athabascan Artifact Cards throughout the unit in the various stories and drawings they see. Have them identify those objects which have been described in the "Artifact Information Book" as they came across them in their reading.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE OF

Book 4, "Younger Sister and Spider Woman"

This is a traditional Upper Tanana Athabascan story, one which has counterparts in most of the other Alaskan Athabascan areas. It was typically told on winter evenings, probably by an older relative -- a grandmother or aunt. This story, like folk stories everywhere, was loved and anticipated by children. A child heard the story over and over through the years and asked for it to be told to him; and with each telling, his appreciation of the story grew.

The story is a translation of the tale as told by Lucy Adam of Tetlin. It has been paraphrased to the extent that it has been put in standard English, rather than being a word-to-word translation. Unfortunately, in translating, much of the storyteller's style and drama have been lost. In spite of the shortcomings inherent in a translated story, the action which occurs is authentic, and the metaphors and similes are accurate.

The story would probably be most appreciated if it were read aloud by you to your students.

They might want to read it again later, on their own.

Discussion following the story might center around one or more of the following ideas:

1. How does this story differ from the story as you know it in your village?

2. What lessons do you think an older relative was trying to get across to her offspring when she told this story?

3. Talk about the action in the story, to be sure students understand what was happening.

4. Have students draw pictures which show what they think Spider Woman looked like.

5. Act the story out as a play, puppet play, or radio play.

6. How was an Athabascan child educated in the old days? How does this differ from present day methods of education?

SUGGESTION FOR USE OF

Book 5, "When People Meet Animals"

This booklet illustrates the relationship Alaskan Athabascans perceived between themselves and the natural environment around them, specifically that portion of the environment which contained animals. As the stories show, the relationship was very intimate: at one time in the mythical past, human beings and animals had actually been able to converse, and slip into each other's worlds with a minimum of effort. Even though those times were, for the most part, past, there remained a very close relationship between the human and the animal realms.

The stories are arranged to introduce these concepts gradually. The first story, "Nihts'iil", merely points out that animals are to be respected as much as humans would like to be respected -- a sort of Golden Rule toward animals. Animals are portrayed as intelligent creatures with feelings similar to those of humans. And animals are not to be treated cavalierly, because it is thanks to the animals that humans are able to survive. Humans should appreciate that, and should express their gratitude to the animals.

Chapter II, "The Female Beaver", is a bit more complex in what it tries to tell the reader. Again, the idea that animals and humans must help each other out, in a reciprocal relationship, is expressed. In addition, it tells about the mythical times when people and animals were not just similar but could actually become one another. And it recounts a specific incident in the mythical past from which a certain custom derived.

Chapter III, "First Salmon Story", continues with the same theme as the beaver story. A threat is given to human beings: "If you don't follow these rules, we will never return to you again." It is a threat which was taken very seriously, because it went to the heart of survival: food. It was assumed by the people that the salmon would know if the rules had been broken.

The last story, "A Bear Hunt", explains how animals know when a rule has been broken. It explains that animals had spirits (the Lower Koyukon word is "yega"), and that through its spirit, an animal was made aware of human transgressions. The spirit reported these trangressions to the animal, and thus the animal itself acted as if it had been personally slighted. "A Bear Hunt" describes one of the possible consequences of not following the proper rules. There were others, such as sickness or starvation caused when the animal whose yega had been insulted refused to be caught.

Discussion and activities surrounding this booklet might center on some of the following:

1. Discuss the people's attitudes and ideas about animals, as evidenced by these stories.

2. Discuss your students' attitudes about animals. One way to begin the discussion might be to make a list of the many English expressions which make some judgmental statement about an animal. For instance, "sly as a fox;" "quick as a cat;" "wise as an owl;" and so forth. Make a list of animals the students are familiar with, and elicit descriptive comments on each of the animals to place beside each name. Discuss why students feel the way they do about each animal. Compare and contrast students' ideas about animals with traditional Athabascan ideas, as expressed in the stories.

3. Have the students rewrite one of the stories, telling it from the animal's point of view.

4. Discuss present attitudes about hunting, including the reasons for hunting, the emotions involved in a hunt, the emotions felt after a successful hunt. Compare and contrast these attitudes with pre-contact attitudes held by the Athabascans of 200 years ago.

5. What lessons were parents trying to teach their children when they told the four stories in "When People Meet Animals"?

SUGGESTION FOR USE OF

Book 2, "Tetlin As I Knew It," Chapter III

1. Again, follow on the Resource Map of Tetlin the travels of Ms. Jimerson's family as it moves to Beaver Camp. Continue to plot your students' movements on your classroom resource map (see Lesson I, Activity #17).

2. What do you think Ms. Jimerson's family had for breakfast? Lunch?

3. Why wouldn't the beavers eat the snare pole made of dry wood?

4. What do you think the members of the family who stayed at camp while others were checking snares did to pass the time?

5. Have students write a story from Ms. Jimerson's mother's point of view, either about moving to Tetlin as a young girl, or about changing her way of life when white teachers and ministers came.

6. Why was the coming of white men "terrifying" and "a scarey time for the people of Tetlin"?

7. What things would have been different if this story had taken place 100 years ago rather

than 20 years ago? Make a note of the parts of the story that give you a clue about how recently the events described took place.

8. Write a poem about an experience you have had camping out: the sights, smells, sounds, and feels. What did you think about? What were your emotions?

LESSON IV: BEYOND THE BAND

OBJECTIVES

To introduce the three major ways in which contact with outside groups was maintained by pre-contact Athabascans: potlatches, war and trade.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Students should understand the reasons for pre-contact wars and compare these with present-day wars.

Students should develop and play a trade game based on information on pre-contact trade relationships in interior Alaska.

MATERIALS PROVIDED AS PART OF THE UNIT

Book 6, "Needzeek: The Boy Who Went to the Moon"
Book 2, "Tetlin As I Knew It", Chapter III

MATERIALS YOU SHOULD HAVE ON HAND

Art supplies to make Trade Game

RESOURCE LIST OF RELATED MATERIALS

Books: Griese, Arnold, At the Mouth of the Luckiest River. Deals with trade between Athabascans and Eskimos.

Erkin, Annette, Contact and Change.

Michael, Henry N. (ed), Lt. Zagoskin's Travels in Russian America 1842-1844.

Film: Age of the Beaver - A brief history of the fur trade in Canada, using old paintings, engravings, and animated maps.
Produced by the National Film Board of Canada; 16th Floor; 1251 Avenue of the Americas; New York, N.Y. 10020.

LESSON IV: BEYOND THE BAND

Background Information

Potlatches

Although the family and the local band have been stressed up until now as representing the social world of Alaskan Athabascans, the interior Indians did have periodic contact with people from other groups. The Gathering-Up ceremony or potlatch has been discussed in the previous lesson. This was one event at which people from different local and even regional bands met. The several regional bands attending a potlatch might have spoken slightly different dialects which were nonetheless close enough to each other to be mutually intelligible. The importance of potlatches in establishing friendly ties with outside groups has already been discussed: marriages and trade partnership often grew out of association at a potlatch.

Wars and Feuds

Relations between neighboring bands were not always friendly, however. Wars among people of different bands and between the Indians and neighboring cultures (particularly Eskimo and Tlingit) were quite frequent in pre-contact times. These wars took the form of surprise raids and ambushes rather than open, planned, hand-to-hand combat. A war became a feud when two groups continually raided each other's settlements in retaliation of casualties incurred during the previous attack.

The original motives for wars seem to have been desire for women and for goods, and, in the case of ongoing feuds, revenge. A principle which seems to have underlain feuds was similar to a Judaeo-Christian precept, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." When a member of a person's family was killed, it was his duty to avenge that death. If the murderers were of a different band and totally unrelated, the death of a member of the murderer's family was often the only satisfactory payment for the first murder. On the other hand, a family sometimes accepted payment in goods for the death of a relative, the amount of payment depending on the status of the dead person. People were more likely to accept payment from a close friend or relative than from strangers or members of an enemy group.

Another important concept for understanding wars and feuds is the insider-outsider dichotomy which was part of the precontact Athabascan world view. Language and kinship relationships served to define who was a member of the in-group to some extent, but even more, the people to whom one was closely related and with whom one came into contact day after day (the local band members) were considered part of one's group. The less well one knew another person and the other person's customs, the less one identified with him, and the less his death affected one personally.

Since the extended family (which made up the membership of a local band) was the most important social unit to an individual, it is not surprising that feuds were basically family or sib affairs, not regional band affairs. It was the family's responsibility to avenge the death of one of its members, although other band members who were not members of the same sib sometimes went along if the war leader were charismatic enough to persuade them. Since kin relationships extended beyond the band, however, it was often also true that a member of the band might warn a relative in the enemy band that an attack was imminent. This seems to have happened as often as did cooperation among different families within the band. The individualistic nature of Athabascan society is highlighted in this aspect of their culture as with others: a person could choose whether or not he wished to take part in a raid.

Fear and distrust of strangers seem to be a universal human emotion, one which is evident in the story of Needzeek. It certainly plays a large part in today's international affairs.

Trade

Another type of contact with outsiders took the form of trade relationships. As was stated above, men often established trade partnerships with a member of a neighboring Athabascan band or Eskimo community, so that they could conduct trade on a person-to-person level and be assured of safe travel in strange territory.

Extensive trade routes were well established between Athabascan groups and their neighbors before white men came to Alaska. In precontact days, the commodities the Athabascans obtained from neighboring Native groups had sometimes originated in Europe and had filtered through the trade routes until they finally reached interior Alaska (usually the end of the route for trade goods) from the east or west. But there were also Native goods which were traded from area to area. No one part of the north was abundant in all resources, and inland peoples traded with seashore peoples to their mutual advantage. Directions follow for developing a trade game which points out the principle elements of pre-contact trade. The game can be used to illustrate the fact that extensive trade routes existed prior to contact with European culture, and can specify both the trade routes themselves and the commodities which moved along the routes.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE OF

Book 6, "Needzeek - The Boy That Went To The Moon"

This is a traditional Upper Tanana story, translated into English. It is divided into two parts for purposes of this Lesson, and each part deals with a different aspect of relations with people outside one's own group. The first part deals with a blood feud, and the second with a person's acceptance into a new band. You might want to read this to students, or have them read it themselves.

Then, possible topics for discussion or activity suggestions might be:

1. First, use the story as description: Glean as much information about traditional feuds as your class can, using the story as your source. Describe traditional Alaskan Athabascan wars and feuds to students (see preceding section).

2. After the class has made a descriptive statement about Upper Tanana feuds, ask them for their reactions to the story. Do they feel Needzeek was justified in killing the members of the other band? Why or why not? Needzeek felt he was doing the right thing. Why did he feel that way?

Compare this feud with international wars in our own times. Do we have attitudes about the "enemy" similar to Needzeek's feelings about his enemies?

3. Talk about Needzeek's loyalty to his grandmother. Extend this to a discussion about Athabascan family and band loyalty. Relate these feelings with school spirit, nationalism, pride of family, etc.

4. Part II of Needzeek deals with the young man's experiences when he attempts to become a member of a new band. What lessons were Athabascan children taught by this story? Talk about the way in which Needzeek was treated by the band. Have your students ever been left out of a group or activities? Have them write poems or stories about experiences when they wanted to become members of a group but were not admitted at first -- or when they, as members of a group, were deciding whether or not to admit a new person into it.

5. In Chapter III of "Tetlin As I Knew It," Shirley Jimerson mentions that her mother came to live in Tetlin from another village. Review this section of the chapter and talk about it. What

sorts of barriers do students think Ms. Jimerson's mother might have been met with by people already living in Tetlin? How was she able to overcome them? Have students imagine the situation from the mother's point of view, and have them write or draw a story about the experience. If any of your students' parents come from a different culture or country, have them write about personal experiences of learning to live in a new place.

6. Dramatize parts or all of this story, having students write scripts and make costumes (you might use puppets), and then act out the play. Invite another class to the production. Perhaps one of the students could give an explanation of the play which would place it in a cultural context for the visiting students. Students should remember that their visitors probably will not know much about traditional Athabascan culture when they come to visit.

SUGGESTION FOR DESIGNING AN ATHABASCAN TRADING GAME:

A fairly simple game depicting pre-contact Athabascan trade routes and commodities can be designed by you and your class. A description of one possible variation of such a game follows:

MAKE A GAME BOARD

First, make a game board. It can be a large map of Alaska, divided into grid squares about 50 miles to a side (determine the size of the squares you feel would be most workable). Students move game pieces within the grid squares.

Determine and mark routes of travel. Trade routes existed:

1. Along the major rivers (travel could go both upriver and downriver, since trade often occurred in spring before breakup), and across the Bering Strait to Siberia via St. Lawrence Island.

Yukon, Koyukuk, Tanana, Copper, Kuskokwim, Innoko, Pelly, Porcupine, Kobuk, Buckland, Taku, Stikine, Stoney Rivers.

2. Over Passes Chilkoot and Chilkat in Southeastern Alaska; Mentasta Pass.

3. Short distances on land between waterways

(Some were short portages in summer)

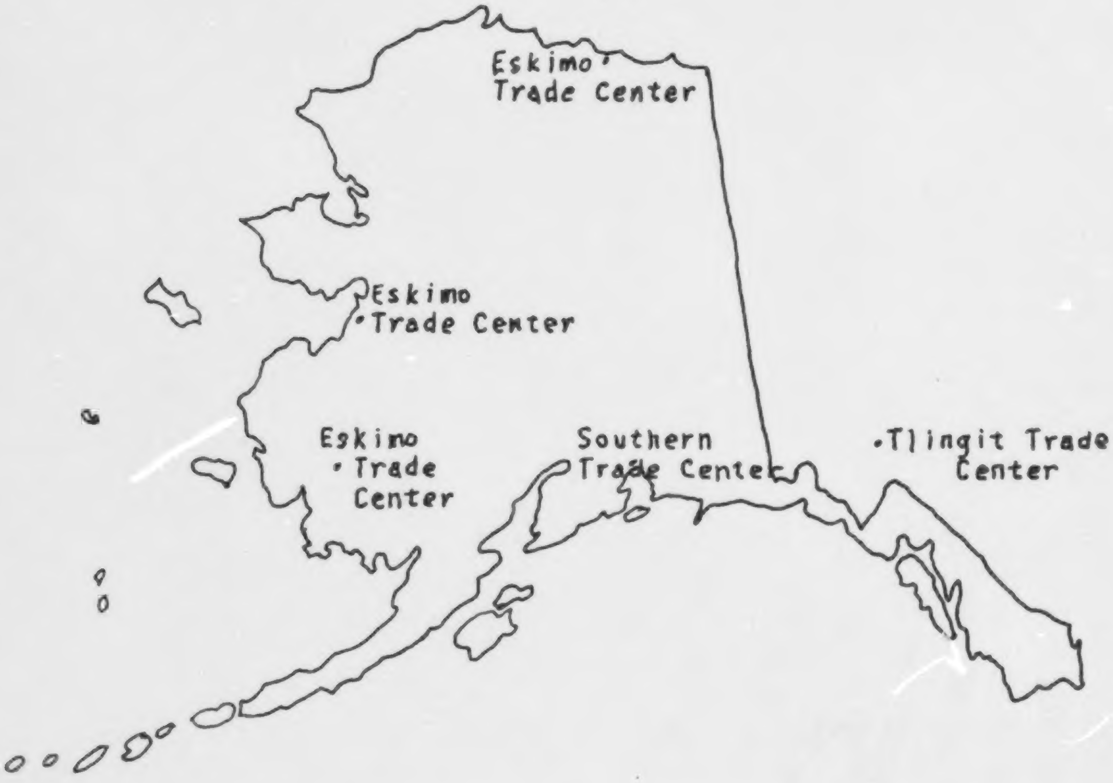
Between the Koyukuk and the Kobuk

Between Cook Inlet and Stoney River

Between Unalakleet and the Yukon

Between Chandalar River and the Arctic Ocean

Between the Tanana and the White Rivers


Eskimo Trade Center
Eskimo Trade Center
Eskimo Trade Center
Southern Trade Center
Tlingit Trade Center

The object of the game would be to move game pieces along trade routes to Trade Centers of other groups (see illustration). Once in a foreign Trade

Center, players would trade Athabascan commodities for Southern Tribes (Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian), or Eskimo commodities.

To make play interesting, mark some of the squares HAZARD squares; others BOON squares. Make HAZARD and BOON cards to correspond. If a player lands on one of these special squares, he must draw the appropriate card and do what it says.

Examples of HAZARDS:

1. You can't go on until the river freezes solid. Lose one turn.

2. White-out! You set up camp and wait out the storm. Lose one turn.

3. You get caught by an overhanging branch and it upsets your canoe. Some of your goods go overboard. Lose one card.

4. Your band has been feuding with the neighboring people. As you travel through their country, they ambush you and chase you downriver, and you leave some trade goods behind. Lose one card.

Examples of BOONS:

1. As you're traveling on your trading trip, you come upon a herd of woodland caribou feeding on lichen. Good hunting! Take one card.

2. You have been invited to a potlatch. As your gift, take one card from the pile.

3. The snow has a good strong crust on it. Easy snowshoeing! Take another turn.

4. You meet the chief of the neighboring band as you're traveling through their territory. He is your brother's father-in-law, so he escorts you through his band's territory safely. Take one card.

Next, make commodity cards of several types:

1. Athabascan commodities which students start out with.

2. Eskimo commodities which students must obtain to win the game.

3. Southern Tribes commodities which students must also obtain.

Place the non-Athabascan commodity cards at the appropriate trade centers, dividing the cards evenly between the centers for any one cultural group.

1. Suggestions for Athabascan commodities:

   Sheephorn spoons
   Decorated moccasins
   Wolf moss for dyes
   Caribou hide
   Birchwood bow with porcupine gut string
   Moose hide
   Copper
   Wooden dishes
   Furs

2. Suggestions for Southern Tribes Commodities (Southern Tribes include Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, and groups farther south, all the way down the coast).

Dentalium shells
Abalone shells
Cedar bark
Eulachon oil (oil fendered from the Candlefish, or Eulachon)
Iron

3. Suggestions for Eskimo Commodities

Tools
Iron
Seal oil
Whale oil
Fat
Greenstone for blades

SAMPLE RULES: 4 - 11 players

1. The object of the game is to trade with different groups so that you have, in the end,

3 Athabascan cards

2 Southern tribes cards

2 Eskimo cards

for a total of seven cards.

2. Each player starts with 10 cards, which are all Athabascan Commodities.

3. Each player starts play from a different location on the map (called his home base). Make

one home base card for each of the eleven Alaskan Athabascan language groups (Tanaina, Ahtna, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Lower Tanana, Gwich'in, Han, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Holikachuk, Ingalik). Place cards face down on the table. Players draw one each to determine home base. Then distribute the shuffled Athabascan Commodity cards to each player.

4. Players move on the squares at the roll of the dice. To determine which player goes first, roll dice once. High score is first, and play proceeds in a clockwise direction from that person.

5. Players may move vertically horizontally, or diagonally. They move one square for each number of dice rolls. They may only move on water, either ocean or rivers, and on designated Trade Routes (see Make a Game Board, above). A square which is partially covered by water or through part of which a river flows may be used as a travel route.

6. To obtain the seven cards necessary to win, players may do either of the following:

Trade with another player by going to that player's home base . . . or

Travel to a Trade Center of one of the other cultural groups (Southern Tribes or Eskimo)

7. To trade with another player, a player must first proceed to that player's home base in the normal way, by throwing dice. When he reaches it, the player whose base it is must return home immediately. The visitor then chooses any one of his host's cards for himself, and in return chooses one of his own cards to give to the host. The host has no choice in which cards will be taken from him.

The object in such a trade would be for the guest trader to take one of the cards which the host has already traveled to obtain (an Eskimo or Southern Tribes card), or to obtain a card which is a necessary commodity for trading with one of the other cultural groups. Southern Tribes, for instance, will not accept Furs, so if a player had only Furs commodity cards in his hand he would be unable to trade at a Southern Tribes Trade Center. (See below for a list of the commodities which the various groups will accept.)

The host must wait until his next turn to begin his travels once again. He must then travel from home base where he has been placed, and may not return to the square he was on before the visitor pulled him home to trade.

8. To obtain a card from one of the non-Athabascan areas, a player must move according to the throw of the dice to a Trade Center. Then he may trade as many cards as he wishes in exchange for the desired cards, on a one-for-one basis, providing that he follows these restrictions:

To obtain an Eskimo Card, player must have either

Furs
Sheephorn spoons
Dentalium
Wooden bowl
Caribou hide

Eskimo Trade Centers will not accept any other commodities. Player must have one of these cards for each Eskimo card they wish to obtain. Thus, if a player has only one Furs card of those on the list, he leaves that Furs card at the Trade Center, and can take only one card from the pile of Eskimo commodity cards.

If, however, he has two Furs and one Caribou Hide cards, he may leave all three and pick up three of the desired Eskimo cards.

To obtain a Southern Tribes card, player must have either

Decorated moccasins
Moose hides
Greenstone for toolmaking
Wolf moss
Copper
Birchwood bow with porcupine gut.string

The same rules apply for Southern Tribes cards as so for Eskimo cards: trading is one-for-one.

9. There should be a limited number of Eskimo and Southern Tribes cards. Once all cards in a single pile have been picked up by players, that area may not be visited again. Thus, if all the Eskimo Commodity cards from the Buckland River Trade Center have already been picked up, no one may visit that trading area again during the game. Players may only pick up cards which originate in the non-Athabascan area they are visiting; thus only Eskimo cards can be obtained from Eskimo Trade Centers, and only Southern Tribes cards may be picked up in the Southern Tribes Trade Centers.

The other cards which have been left in trade may not be picked up; they are out of play.

10. If a player lands on a HAZARD square or a BOON square by exact roll of the dice, he must take a card from the appropriate pile and follow directions on the card.

Play ends when one player has the necessary 7 commodity cards.

NOTE: You may want to make adjustments to the rules as you try the game out, if play hits snags or the game is too easy to win.

A variation would be to show post-contact trade routes and to add more European commodities to those obtained in trade. Blankets, beads, tea, tobacco and iron came from the east (Hudson's Bay area) and tobacco, tea, and beads came from the west, obtained by Eskimos from the Russians, and then traded to the Indians in Eskimo Trade Centers.

AFTER YOU'VE PLAYED THE GAME:

Be sure to discuss what students have learned from the game: review trade routes and commodities. Discuss how European goods would have changed the balance of trade. Who, for instance, was likely to have the more desirable items after contact? Why were Athabascans at the end of the line in receiving trade goods? Did this put them in a favorable or unfavorable situation economically? Socially? How might the fur trade have changed life for the Athabascans, aside from their obtaining a few trade goods? How, for instance, might their hunting and trapping activities have changed?

In the game as described above, each player can conceivably travel all over the state. Work out another game which requires cooperation of people all along the way and which highlights trading partnerships. For instance, one rule might be that a player may only trade with someone two culture areas away -- no further; or, that player must find a trading partner before he can begin to trade.

You might also work out a simulation game which involves barter. Divide the class into two groups, for instance Indian and Eskimo. Determine which goods are the most necessary for the other group to obtain, which group has the most desirable goods, etc., based on your knowledge of Athabascan culture. Each group must try to obtain the goods they need at the least cost to them. Afterwards, discuss when negotiations might break down in a real bartering situation, the importance of knowing the "rules" of barter, etc.

Discuss the ways in which the Athabascan Trade Game, as described on preceding pages, is unrealistic to the actual situation. In what ways is it fairly accurate?

LESSON V: SPRING AGAIN

OBJECTIVES:

To teach students about spring and summer activities.

BEHAVORIAL OBJECTIVES:

Students should make a model of at least one object which reflects spring and summer subsistence activities.

Students should by now exhibit understanding of some of the differences between past and present practices in Athabascan areas, and give reasons for some of the differences.

Students should observe their own environment to notice the changes spring brings, and the changing availability of natural resources at that time of year.

MATERIALS PROVIDED AS PART OF THE UNIT:

Book 2, "Tetlin As I Knew It," Chapters IV & V
Resource Map of Tetlin
Book 7, "Koyukon Riddles"

RESOURCE LIST OF RELATED MATERIALS:

Books:

Wulf, Charles A, Beaver Trapping.

Films:

Cesar's Bark Canoe - Building a canoe solely from the materials that the forest provides may become a lost art, even among the Indians whose traditional craft it is. Cesar Newashish, 67-year old Cree Indian of the Manowan Reserve North of Montreal, builds a canoe in the old way, using only birch bark, cedar splints, spruce roots, and gum. Obtain from EDC Distribution Center; 39 Chapel Street; Newton, Mass. 02160.

Portage - The wealth of the northern forests supply the materials for the ancient craft of making birch-bark canoes, which is passed on from generation to generation. Setting traps and following the traplines are other Indian skills presented.
Obtain from Learning Materials Service Unit; Ontario Department of Education; 449 Jarvis St.; Toronto 85, Ontario; CANADA

Videocassettes;

Building a Birch Bark Canoe. Obtain from Tanana Survival School; Tanana Chiefs, Inc.; 102 Lacey St.; Fairbanks 99701.

Fish Wheel - building and fishing with a fish wheel. Obtain from Tanana Survival School.

Fishing on the Yukon - The students of the Tanana Survival School learn three different methods of subsistence fishing. Obtain from Tanana Survival School.

LESSON V: SPRING AGAIN

Background Information:

Late winter, from March until May, was a time of long days and often good travel conditions. Snow obtained a crust which made hunting on snowshoes easy, but which was not sturdy enough to hold moose. Hence moose hunting was good at this time of year. Other hunting and trapping activities increased, as described in Chapter IV of "Tetlin As I Knew It." Local bands began their travels once again, leaving the semi-permanent winter houses behind and hauling skin tents to good hunting and trapping locales.

The lengthening of the days signaled the time for another activity, at least for the Koyukon Indians: It was the time to pose riddles. Father Jette noted,

> As the story-telling occupies the long winter evenings and entertains the Ten'a (Koyukon) during the time that precedes the winter solstice, so also the proposing of riddles is the time-honored recreation for the latter half of the winter, when the days wax long, and the chilled hearts, under the sun's increasing brightness and warmth, begin to cheer, and fill with glowing anticipations of the exhuberant summer life.*

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*Father Julius Jette, "Riddles of the Ten'a Indians" in Anthropos 1913, p. 181.

A booklet of Koyukon riddles, as collected by Father Jette, has been included for use with this lesson.

The pattern of hunting and trapping subsistence activities by day, often followed by riddle-telling by night, continued until just before break-up. Break-up was perhaps the roughest time of year for pre-contact Athabascans. Caches were almost empty and animals were thin from a long, cold winter. Fish hadn't started to run yet, birds hadn't returned to the north, ice was dangerous to travel on, but the water wasn't open, so travel by canoe was impossible.

Once break-up finally came, though, spring, and soon afterward summer, had finally arrived. Shoots from new plants were gathered, fishing started again, and the busy summer and fall activities were underway.

In this lesson, concentrate on some of the springtime and summer activities which took place 20 years ago, as described in "Tetlin As I Knew It." Have your students read Chapters IV and V. Activities to follow can include:

1. Make models of some of the implements Ms. Jimerson describes.

2. Compare Ms. Jimerson's life with both pre-contact and present-day subsistence activities (review Chapter I, "Nıhts'iil", of "When People Meet Animals", for instance).

3. Trace the travels of Ms. Jimerson's family on the Resource Map of Tetlin.

4. Make three-dimensional models of beaver and muskrat houses and study the habits of these animals.

5. Invite adults experienced in muskrat trapping and in fishing to talk to the class and describe these activities in greater detail.

6. Take field trips outside to record the changes that spring brings and the difference it makes in the availability of various natural resources from your area.

SELECTED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
ON ALASKAN ATHABASCAN CULTURES

A. Adult Literature

Including ethnographies, bibliographies, and fiction specifically on Athabascan cultures as well as some general works of interest.

Allen, Lt. Henry T., Atnatanas; Natives of Copper River, Alaska
Smithsonian Institute Report Extract; 1886. Reprinted by Shorey Book Store; Seattle; 1970.

This short booklet offers a description of Ahtna material culture in the late nineteenth century. Subsistence activities and house types, as well as a brief inventory of tools and weapons, are described.

Erkin, Annette E., Contact and Change
University of Alaska Museum and the National Endowment for the Humanities; Fairbanks; 1972.

This book was written to accompany a traveling exhibit of Alaskan Native artifacts which was produced at the University of Alaska Museum. The book describes the basic changes which occurred in each of the major ethnic groups of Alaska after contact with European culture.

Fry, Alan, Come A Long Journey
Doubleday Canada Ltd; Toronto, Ontario; 1971.

A story of the early trade relations between interior Athabascans and the coastal Tlingits. Although the book is fiction, it affords a good view of life and inter-cultural relationships of several generations ago.

Graburn, Nelson H.H. and Strong, B. Stephen, Circumpolar Peoples: An Anthropological Perspective
Goodyear Publishing Co., Inc.; Pacific

Palisades, California; 1973.

This book surveys the Native circumpolar cultures. Of particular interest for this bibliography are two chapters, "Aboriginal Subsistence Patterns of the Athabascan Indians" and "An Economic History of the Kutchin".

Guedon, Marie-Francoise, People of Tetlin, Why are you Singing?: A Study of the Social Life of the Upper Tanana Indians
National Museum of Man; Ottawa; 1974.

Guedon's main focus is the social organization of the Upper Tanana Athabascans as it appeared in 1969-70 when she did her fieldwork in Alaska. Other topics covered are the subsistence cycle, life cycle, and social ceremonialism.

Hadleigh-West, Frederick, The Netsi-Kutchin: An Essay in Human Ecology
University Microfilms; Ann Arbor. Reprint of PhD Dissertation submitted to Louisiana State University; 1963.

The author did field work in Northern Alaska among the Netsi Kutchin (also called "Chandalar Kutchin" in some publications) with the purpose of discovering the relationship between cultural practices and the environment in which those practices took place.

Helm, June, Subarctic Athapaskan Bibliography
University of Iowa; Iowa City; 1973.

The volume contains "all bibliographic references that pertain to the ethnology and linguistics of the Athapaskans of Canada and Alaska."

Hippler, Arthur E. and Wood, John R., The Subarctic Athabascans: A Selected Bibliography
Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, University of Alaska; Fairbanks; 1974.

A well-arranged annotated bibliography

of general and cultural anthropology works on Alaskan and Canadian Athabascans. Emphasis is placed on the psychological aspect of Athabascan life as represented in the publications.

Hosley, Edward H., Factionalism and Acculturation in an Alaskan Athapaskan Community University Microfilms; Ann Arbor. Originally PhD Dissertation for UCLA; 1966.

Hosley bases his study on the changes which have occurred in traditional Athabascan culture in the McGrath area. Linguistic evidence indicates that, while Hosley calls these people "Ingalik", they may actually be "Upper Kuskokwim".

Hosley, Edward H., The McGrath Ingalik Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska, Vol. 9, No. 2, May 1961.

Hosley gives a brief description of present-day (1960) life in Nicolai, Medfra, McGrath, and Telida. The Athabascans in this area might be, recent linguistic evidence suggests, Lower Kuskokwim rather than Ingalik speakers.

Lantis, Margaret, ed., Ethnohistory in Southwestern Alaska and the Southern Yukon University Press of Kentucky; Lexington; 1970.

Two chapters deal with Athabascan ethnohistory (history of a group based on oral tradition or historic sources): "Tanaina Ethnohistory: An Example of a Method for the Study of Cultural Change" by Joan B. Townsend and "Indian Stories About the First Whites in Northwestern America" by Catherine McClellan.

Leechman, Douglas, The Vanta Kutchin National Museum of Canada; Ottawa; 1954.

The book provides a brief account of Old Crow in Northern Yukon Territory. It includes accounts of warfare, clothing, art and funeral ceremonies.

Loyens, William J., The Changing Culture of the Nulato Koyukon Indians
University Microfilms; Ann Arbor. Originally published as PhD Dissertation for the University of Wisconsin; 1966.

Descriptions of traditional, transitional, and modern Lower Koyukon culture are provided. Effects of the major agents of change -missionaries and government - are examined.

McKennan, Robert A., The Chandalar Kutchin
Arctic Institute of North America; Montreal; 1965.

This is the most extensive ethnography of the Chandalar Kutchin, a group which is today centered around Arctic Village. It was the result of a summer of field work in 1933, and reports on the culture of that time. It also makes tentative reconstructions of pre-contact cultural practices, based on historical sources and accounts of Chandalar Kutchin informants.

McKennan, Robert A., The Upper Tanana Indians
Yale University Publications in Anthropology #55. Yale University; New Haven; 1959.

An account of life in Upper Tanana society in 1929-1930, based on field work by the author. The Upper Tanana Indians had been little affected by white men at the time the field work took place.

Michael, Henry N., ed., Lieutenant Zagoskin's Travels in Russian America 1842-1844
University of Toronto Press; Toronto; 1967.

Zagoskin investigated the Lower Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers in 1842-44, and left this record of his travels. Much of the information is on the geography of the area, although he also provides valuable information on the culture of the Ingalik and Koyukon Athabascans and Eskimos he encountered. He also documented trading practices in the Yukon and Kuskokwim Valleys, indicating the goods and prices for goods which were traded.

Murdock, George Peter, Ethnographic Bibliography of North America, Third Edition
Human Relations Area Files Press; New Haven; 1972.

This is a complete (as of 1960) bibliography of all works on North American Native peoples. Consult it for journal articles not listed in the general bibliography.

National Museum of Man, Canada and the Royal Scottish Museum, The Athapaskans: Strangers of the North
National Museum of Man; Ottawa; 1974.

This is a catalogue from a traveling museum exhibit sponsored jointly by the National Museum of Man and the Royal Scottish Museum. The scholarly text is balanced by numerous beautiful photographs of Athabascan tools and art.

Nelson, Richard D., Hunters of the Northern Forest
University of Chicago Press; Chicago; 1973.

Nelson describes subsistence activities of Alaskan Kutchin Athabascans in great detail, based on his stays in Chalkyitsik, Huslia, and Hughes. Comparisons are made between Athabascan and Eskimo adaptation to extreme climate.

Olson, Wallace M., Minto, Alaska: Cultural and Historical Influences on Group Identity
A thesis presented to the Faculty of the University of Alaska; 1968.

Some of the problems of acculturation and assimilation, as evidenced by the Tanana Athabascans of Minto, are examined. A good pre-contact picture of life in the area is also presented.

Osgood, Cornelius, Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin
Human Relations Area Files Press; New Haven; 1970.

This publication provides a reconstruction of 19th Century Kutchin Athabascan culture. Osgood covers the standard topics for an ethnography (environment, material culture, social organization, and belief systems).

Osgood, Cornelius, The Distribution of the Northern Athapaskan Indians
Human Relations Area Files Press; New Haven; 1970.

First published in 1936, this short book provides information on the distribution of Alaskan and Canadian Athabascan groups, and proposes a system of dividing the Indians into linguistic groupings. All previous spellings and references to Athabascan groups are included.

Osgood, Cornelius, The Ethnography of the Tanaina
Human Relations Area Files Press; New Haven; 1966.

Osgood's fieldwork in Cook Inlet took place in 1931. From this work he produced this volume, a good general ethnography of the Tanaina. It deals with the material culture, the social culture, and with mythology.

Osgood, Cornelius, The Han Indians
Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 74; New Haven; 1971.

Osgood surveyed and synthesized existing ethnographic accounts of the Han Athabascans to provide the first unified publication about this group of Indians.

Osgood, Cornelius, Ingalik Material Culture

Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 22.
Human Relations Area Files Press; New Haven; 1970.

This is a large catalogue of all phases of Ingalik material culture, from tools and weapons to ceremonial objects. Information on each object is exhaustive, and includes illustrations as well as descriptions on manufacture, use, etc. A companion volume to Ingalik Mental Culture and Ingalik Social Culture.

Osgood, Cornelius, Ingalik Mental Culture
Yale University Publications in Anthropology #56. Yale University; New Haven; 1959.

The beliefs of the Ingalik Athabascans are covered in this companion volume to Ingalik Material Culture and Ingalik Social Culture. Topics covered are: the natural world, the social world, the spiritual world, and mythology.

Osgood, Cornelius, Ingalik Social Culture
Yale University Publications in Anthropology #53. Yale University; New Haven; 1958.

The social aspects of the following topics are covered: village activities, family life, interpersonal relations, and individual behavior. This is a companion volume to Ingalik Material Culture and Ingalik Mental Culture.

Parsons, Elsie Clews (editor), American Indian Life
University of Nebraska Press; Lincoln; 1967. Originally published in 1922 by B. W. Huebsch, Inc.

Anthropologists portray life in American Indian societies in 27 stories. Each story is written as if by a Native of the Indian group being described, and though the accounts are actually written by anthropologists, the information and action depicted are true. The stories are written for the layman.

Of interest for this bibliography are two tales of Northern Athabascans, one of which is about a woman from Anvik, Alaska.

Pitts, Roger Steven, The Changing Settlement Patterns and Housing Types of the Upper Tanana Indians
MA Thesis for University of Alaska; Fairbanks; 1972.

This is an exhaustive survey of the different structures which were a part of traditional Upper Tanana culture. There are many illustrations and photographs. Changing settlement patterns, brought about most recently by the Alaska Highway, are also examined.

Spencer, Robert F. and Jennings, Jesse D. et. al. (editors), The Native Americans
Harper and Row; New York; 1965.

This is a general sourcebook on American Indians and Eskimos. It contains information on prehistory, archaeological techniques, and general ethnographies of different Native groups. One section is devoted to "Athabascans of the Western Sub-Arctic".

Sullivan, Robert J., The Ten'a Food Quest
The Catholic University of America; Washington, D.C.; 1942.

Sullivan reports on subsistence activities of the Ten'a (Koyukon) Athabascans, as they took place in 1936-7. He includes customs and beliefs which surrounded the various activities.

Townsend, Joan B., Ethnohistory and Culture Change of the Iliamna Tanaina
University Microfilms; Ann Arbor. Originally PhD Dissertation for UCLA; 1965.

This publication focuses on the culture change which has occurred in Tanaina culture since contact, as well as the persistence of some aspects of the culture.

VanStone, James W., Athapaskan Adaptations
Aldine Publishing Company; Chicago; 1974.

VanStone synthesizes written accounts of Canadian and Alaskan Athabascans to provide a good, general view of subsistence activities, social institutions, and belief systems. The various Athabascan groups are divided by subsistence pattern, and good comparative analyses are given.

VanStone, James W. and Townsend, Joan B.,
Kijik: An Historic Tanaina Indian Settlement
Field Museum of Natural History; Chicago; 1970.

The archaeological remains found at Kijik, a village on Lake Clark, are described. Since a great majority of the remains were trade goods the authors spend a large part of the book relating the archaeological results of the dig with historic accounts. Reconstructions of the culture for the early contact period, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are presented.

B. Juvenile Literature

Including both fiction and non-fiction on Alaskan Athabascan cultures.

Anderson, Laura David as told to Audrey Loftus, *According to Mama*
St. Matthew's Episcopal Guild; Fairbanks; 1956.

Mrs. Anderson recounts stories, customs, and beliefs which her mother told her as she was growing up in Upper Tanana area in the early twentieth century.

Griese, Arnold A., illus. by Glo Coalson, *At the Mouth of the Luckiest River*
Thomas Y. Crowell Co.; New York; 1973.

This is a well-written and culturally accurate story about a young Koyukon Athabascan boy and his defiance of the established order in his village.

Henry, Chief, *Koyukon River Stories*
Adult Literacy Laboratory; Anchorage; 1973.

The book contains four stories told by Chief Henry of Huslia to Karen Mark and Sara Minton.

Huntington, James, as told to Lawrence Elliott, *On the Edge of Nowhere*
Crown Publishers Inc.; New York; 1966.

An autobiography of James Huntington, an Athabascan leader.

Lynch, Kathleen, *Making Snowshoes*
Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc.; printed by Adult Literacy Laboratory; Anchorage; 1974.

An illustrated booklet which describes the steps involved in making snowshoes.

Mishler, Craig (collector), *Kutchin Tales*
Adult Literacy Laboratory; Anchorage; 1973.

This book contains four traditional Kutchin stories as told by Moses Peter and Ambrose William.

Osgood, Harriett, Yukon River Children
Oxford University Press; New York; 1944.

The book offers good descriptions of an interior village in the 1940's, from springtime to the next winter. It is interesting reading. However, the characters in the book, all Indians, are made to speak in pidgin English and are often portrayed as backward people who don't really know what's good for them. A paternalistic, outsider-focus is evident throughout the book. There is also a tendency to stereotype.

Osip, Anna Mae, Tanning Moosehide and Making Babish and Rawmane
Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc.; printed at the Adult Literacy Laboratory; Anchorage; 1974.

The tanning techniques of Laura Hancock and the babish and rawmane-making techniques of Maggie Nicholi are detailed in this publication of the Tanana Survival School.

Paul, David, as told to Audrey Loftus, According to Papa
St. Matthew's Episcopal Guild; Fairbanks; 1957.

Paul recounts some of the customs and beliefs his father had told him when he was growing up in Upper Tanana country during the early twentieth century.

Vaudrin, Bill, Tanaina Tales from Alaska
University of Oklahoma Press; Norman; 1969.

Legend-stories -- tales told for entertainment and instruction -- are recounted in this book. They have been edited by Bill Vaudrin, but are based on the stories as they were told to him by the old-timers of Pedro Bay and Nondalton.

Wulf, Charles A., Beaver Trapping
Tanana Chiefs Conference; printed by
Adult Literacy Laboratory; Anchorage;
1974.

An illustrated booklet which describes the steps in trapping beaver and preparing the skin for tanning.

YOUNGER SISTER AND SPIDER WOMAN

A Production of the

Alaska Bilingual Education Center
of the
Alaska Native Education Board
4510 International Airport Road
Anchorage, Alaska

YOUNGER SISTER AND SPIDER WOMAN

Told by Lucy Adam

Collected by
Paul Milanowski

Translated by
Fred Demit

Edited by
Patricia Partnow

May 1975

PART I

Two young girls, sisters, were chasing a butterfly. They followed it outdoors, into the brush. The sisters copied the butterfly's sound as they ran, "Lil, lil, lil, lil, lil."

They followed it, trying to hit it with a stick, but as they came close to the butterfly it flew away. They still ran after it, tried to hit it again, and again it flew away. They kept following the butterfly, and in this way they went many miles from their home.

They were wandering around in an unfamiliar part of the woods when they saw a house in the clearing. They went in and saw an old man sitting in a dark corner. He was cooking a dog! The two sisters looked at the man in horror.

The man looked up and held out the dog

eyes to the girls. "Eat them!" he commanded the girls. The younger sister took one of the eyes. She put it inside her jacket, pretending to eat it. But her older sister actually obeyed the old man. She ate the other eye!

That night the girls stayed in the old man's cabin. The younger sister stayed awake all night, afraid of the old man. But the older sister was not careful. When morning came, she was dead. The old man had killed her.

When it was light, the younger sister saw what had happened to the older girl. She snuck out of the house and ran as fast as she could. She was running away from the old man. Every so often she looked over her shoulder behind her to see if the old man were following her. He was! He was getting closer and closer. Just when he was about to catch her, she threw her bone skin scraper behind her, right in front of the man. "Turn into a big hill!" she commanded. Suddenly, where the skin scraper had struck the ground, a big hill sprang up, right in front of the old man. He had to climb over it while she ran on ahead.

The girl kept running. The man was catching up on her again. She came to a flat place and threw a willow branch over her shoulder. "Turn into a creek!" she commanded. Suddenly, where the willow branch had hit the ground, a willow thicket sprang up. And right in front of it rushed a wide creek. Now the old man had to fight his way through the thicket and swim across the creek. But still he followed her. He was coming closer and closer.

The girl kept running and finally saw ahead of her an old woman. She did not know it then, but she had run up into the sky country and was now running toward the Spider Woman.

"Grandmother!" she cried, "An old man is following me! He killed my older sister and now he is after me!"

The old woman quickly wrapped the young girl up and hid her away in her house. Soon the old man came running up to Spider Woman.

"Where did she go?" he demanded. "I can smell her. Her scent comes right to here. Bring her out or I'll stab you!"

The old woman was not afraid. "You'd better go away, old man, or I will look right at you."

The man did not pay attention to her warning. He started to enter the house. Spider Woman turned toward him and stared right at him. Suddenly, where a man had been standing, there was just a pile of bones on the ground!

"Gather up the bones," Spider Woman said to the young girl. "They will be useful to you. They will turn into anything you say. This, for instance, will become blueberries." She threw a fingernail out onto the ground. Blueberries sprang up. "This will become a rock." She threw a finger bone out onto the ground, and where it fell a rock suddenly appeared.

The old woman and the young girl threw more parts of the dead man out onto the ground. His intestines and heart became blueberries and wild raspberries. One of his bones became cranberries. In this way, all the berries in the country were named and sprang out of the ground, right where the bones fell. Even edible roots were made in this way. All this happened because Spider Woman had turned and looked right at the old man.

PART II

Now the old woman had some sons. And one of them became the husband of the young girl. So the girl stayed and lived with Spider Woman and her sons for a long time.

One day, she said to the old woman, "Grandma, I feel bad. I miss my mother and father and the rest of my family."

Spider Woman understood. "You can go home any time you want. See that rock over in the corner? Lift it up and look under it." The girl went over to the rock and pushed at it. It didn't move. She wrapped her arms around it and pulled. It still didn't move.

"Grandma, I can't move it!" she said.

The old woman walked over and lifted the rock with her walking stick.

"Now," she told her granddaughter, "Look down where the rock used to be."

The girl obeyed. The rock had covered a hole in the ground. When she looked through the hole, she saw underneath, far far down, her mother and father and older brother, walking around at their camp. Then she knew that she was in the sky country.

The Spider Woman rolled the stone back in place and told her granddaughter that she would be able to go back down to the earth, but first she had to make a good strong rope to climb down on. "Twist sinew to make it," she said, "but don't let my sons see it. They won't let you go."

The girl twisted sinew day after day, until finally she thought it was long enough to reach the earth. Again her grandmother rolled the stone away with her stick. They lowered the rope down, but it did not reach the ground.

The stone was rolled back, and the girl twisted more sinew to make the rope longer. She worked day after day, but was careful to hide the rope whenever her husband and his brothers returned to Spider Woman's house. One day, she thought that the rope was finally long enough. Spider Woman rolled the stone away with her stick for a third time and they tested the rope. This time it reached all the way to the earth!

The young girl had made some rock mittens so that her palms would not be burned when she slipped down the rope. She put the mittens on and started her climb to the earth. As she went, she heard Spider Woman call after her, "When you get to the bottom, tug on the rope and I will pull it back up. My sons will be angry when they see you are gone. If it hails and snows, think to yourself, 'My grandma has been killed.' And cry for me."

The girl slid down the rope--down, down, until finally she touched the ground. She tugged on the rope and it was pulled from her, up into the sky. She looked around, and saw, right in front of her, her older brother! He was cutting wood! She embraced him, and he took her to camp where she was finally with her mother and father again. Everyone hugged and kissed; they were so happy to be together again. And the girl stayed with her family from then on.

But one day, it hailed and soft snow came down. Then the girl knew that her grandmother the Spider Woman had been killed. And she cried softly for the old woman.

WHEN PEOPLE MEET ANIMALS

A Production of the
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Anchorage, Alaska
1975

WHEN PEOPLE MEET ANIMALS

written by

Patricia H. Partnow

illustrated by

Jeanette Bailey

6-75-500

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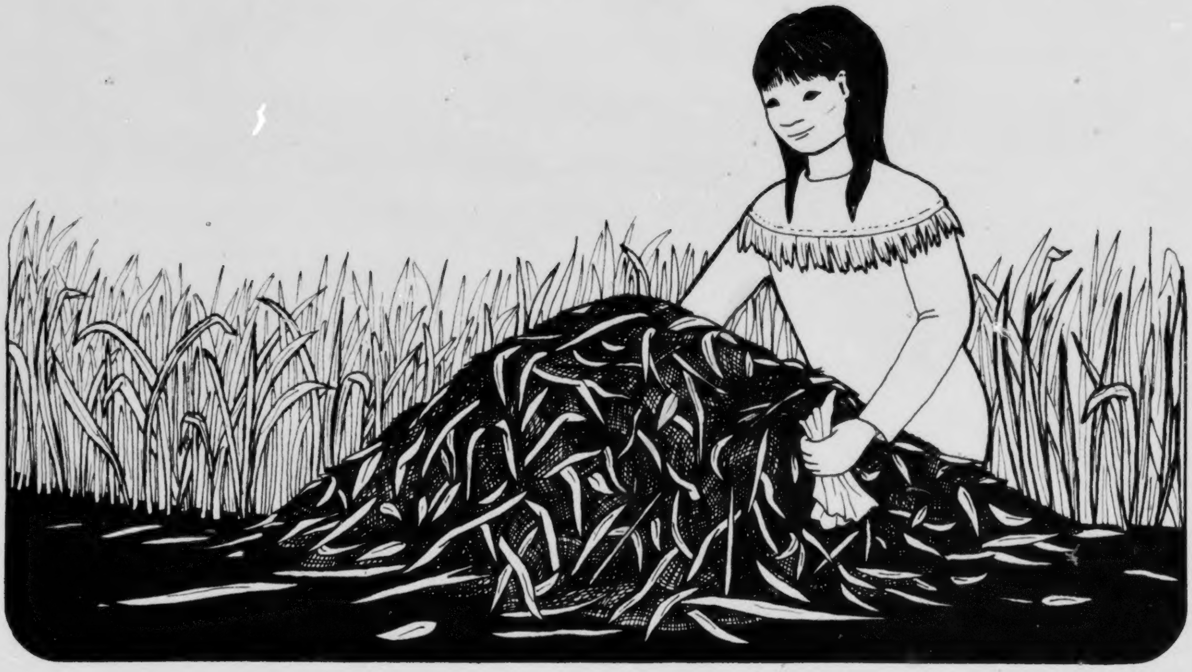
"You've got to pay for the nihts'iil," her mother said when she saw the pile of roots. "Don't forget to leave something in the cache for the muskrat."

"Oh, Mom," her daughter answered, "who would ever know! The muskrat wouldn't know that I was the one that took the nihts'iil. What does it matter?"

"Yes," her mother answered. "The muskrat will know. You've got to pay for what you take. The muskrat worked hard to fill his cache, and you shouldn't empty it without paying for it."

The daughter still wasn't convinced. "What happens if I don't pay for it?" she asked.

The mother answered, "If you don't pay, the muskrat will go into our cache, and take out all our meat."



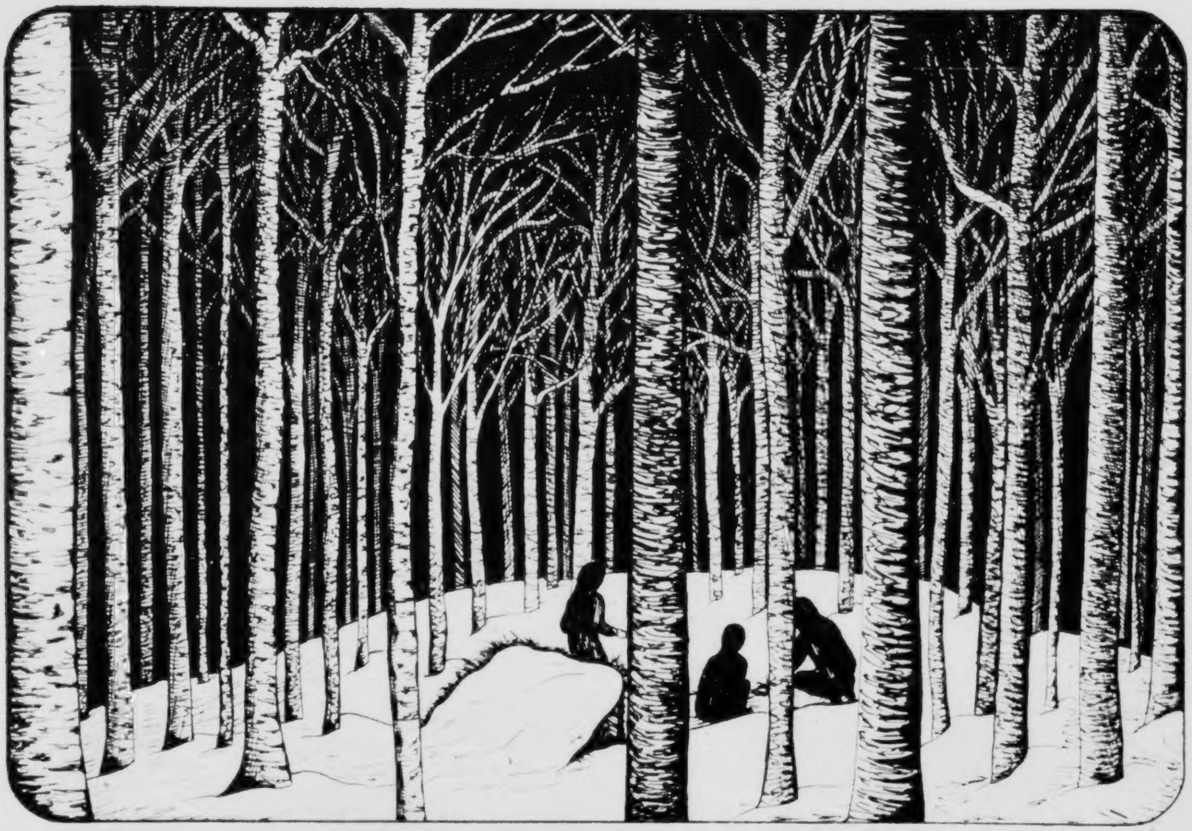
The little girl went back to the cache and left a little bit of cloth for the muskrat.

Adapted from Guedon's People of Tetlin, Why Are You Singing? 1974: 47-48.

CHAPTER II, "The Female Beaver"

There is a Koyukon story that the old people used to tell to their grandchildren on winter nights, when all the children were warm between fur blankets. The fire in the middle of the winter sod house would be burning low and the smell of the smoke would blend with the smell of fresh spruce boughs covering the floor.

The story went something like this:



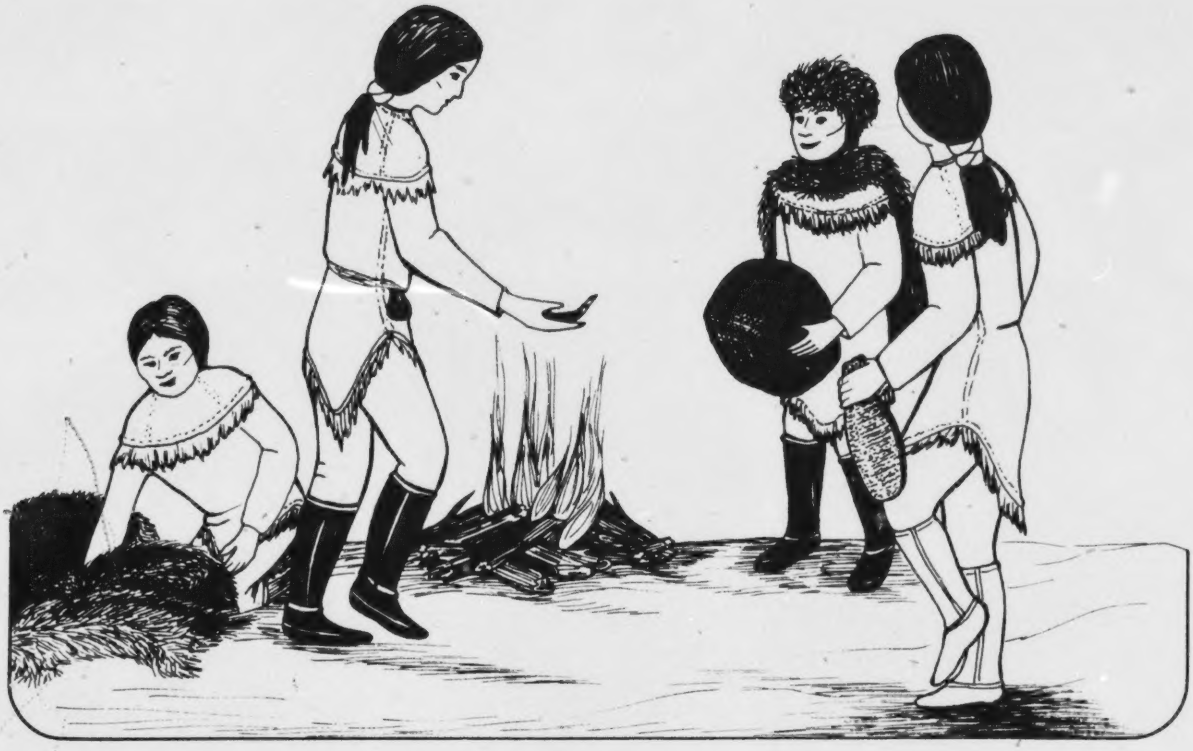
A young man was coming home from a hunting trip late one winter day. He had been walking through deep snow all day and was very tired, but decided to keep walking until he got back to camp. He walked and walked, but didn't see any of the familiar signs of home. He suddenly realized that he was lost.

It was dark by now, but he kept walking, hoping that he would find the camp of another band. Then, he saw a fire through the trees. There was a camp ahead, next to a lake. He started running toward it, and when he got to the camp, was happy to see people, at last!

The man was greeted by the people. They told him that though they looked like people to him, they were really beavers. He had strayed out of human territory and into beaver land.

The young man was very tired. He looked around at the beavers' camp. He saw a pretty young woman next to one of the houses. Although he knew she was really a beaver, he decided to take her as his wife and to stay in the beaver camp. He lived there all winter long, with his new wife and her relatives.

When spring came, the young man knew that it was time to go back to his own home. But springtime is the time of hunger, and the beavers had no extra food to send with the young man for his trip home.



The beaver-people talked it over. They could not give the man food from their caches, but they decided they would let him take one of their children as food for his trip.

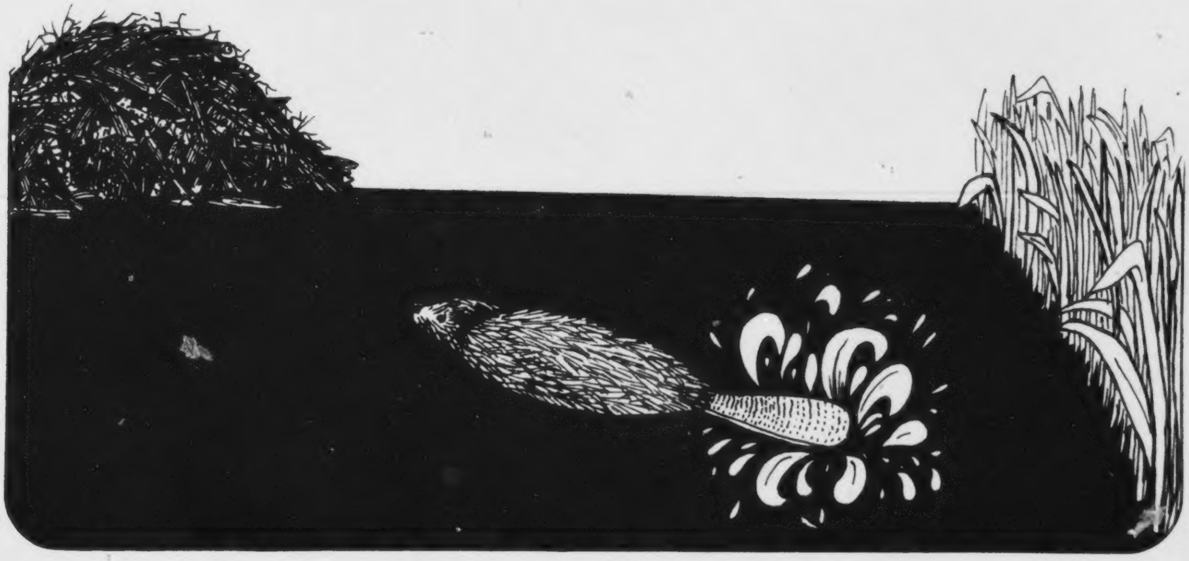
The young man's wife offered to be killed. She would become food for her husband and keep him alive.

Her parents looked at their son-in-law and said to him, "When you have finished with the meat, you must throw the bones into the water, and say 'Tonon Litseey'." This means "be made again in the water".

The young man agreed, and set off for his home village with the beaver meat.

The man got home safely, thanks to the meat he had been given. When he had eaten it all, he threw the bones into the water and said, "Tonon Litseey̲."

Suddenly the female beaver who had been his wife appeared in the water where he had thrown the bones. She swam away to her parents' lodge.



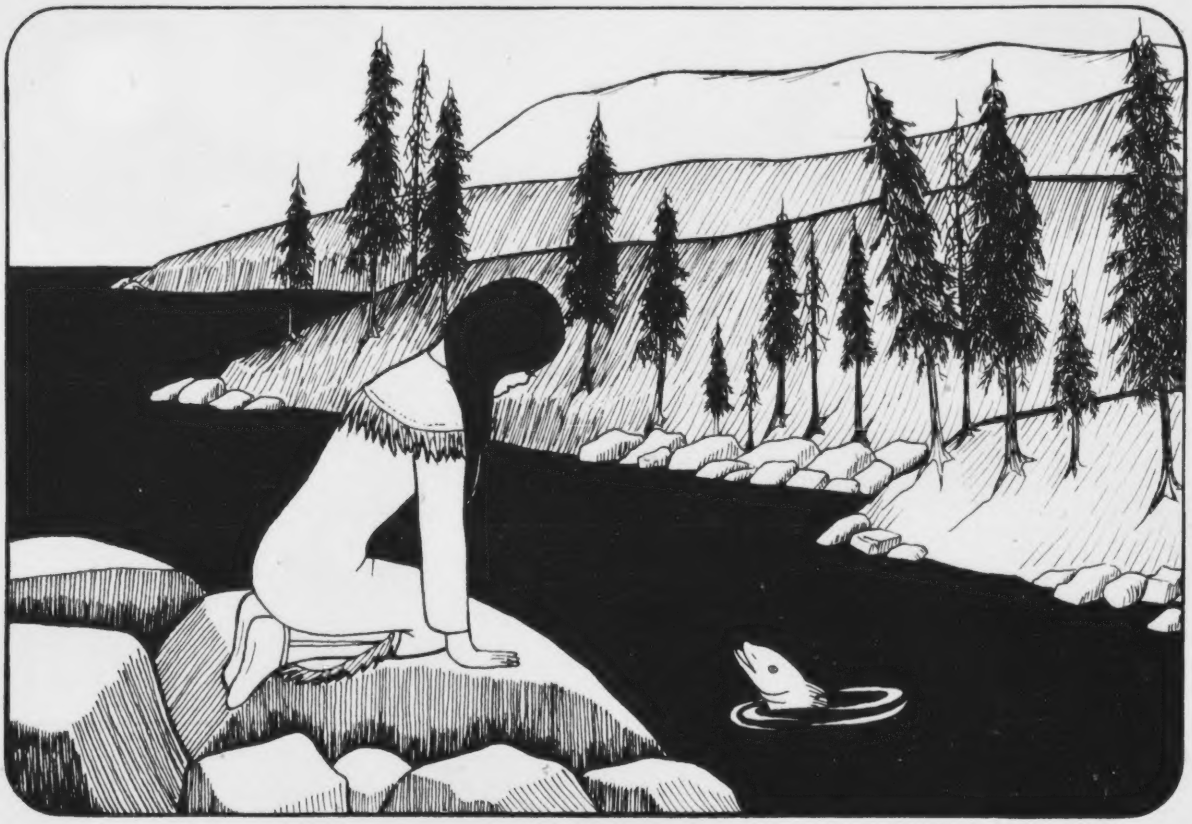
The old people would end their story by saying, "And ever since that time, we have followed the custom of throwing beaver bones into the water after we have eaten the meat."

Adapted from Sullivan's The Ten'a Food Quest, 1942: 107-108.

CHAPTER III, "First Salmon Story"

The Tanaina Athabascans used to tell a story about a salmon. It goes something like this:

One spring day when it was just about time for the salmon run to begin, a rich Tanaina man put out his fish trap as he always did at that time of year. He hoped to catch enough salmon to last his family for the whole year. The man told his daughter not to go near the fish trap.



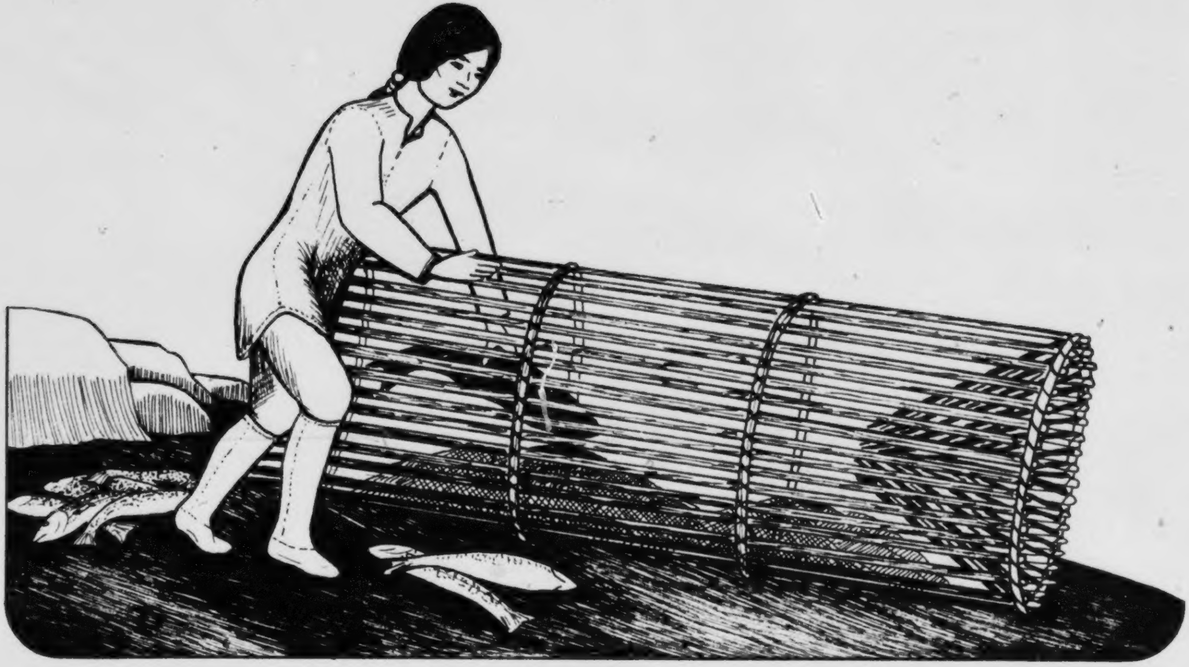
His daughter was curious. She wondered why her father did not want her to see the trap. So, instead of obeying him, she walked down to the river toward the trap.

"I'll be back in a little while," she called to her father as she walked away.

When the girl got down to the river, she went straight to the trap. A big king salmon was swimming around in the water, and she started talking to him.

They talked and talked, and before she knew what was happening, she had turned into a salmon herself! She slid into the water and disappeared with the big king salmon.

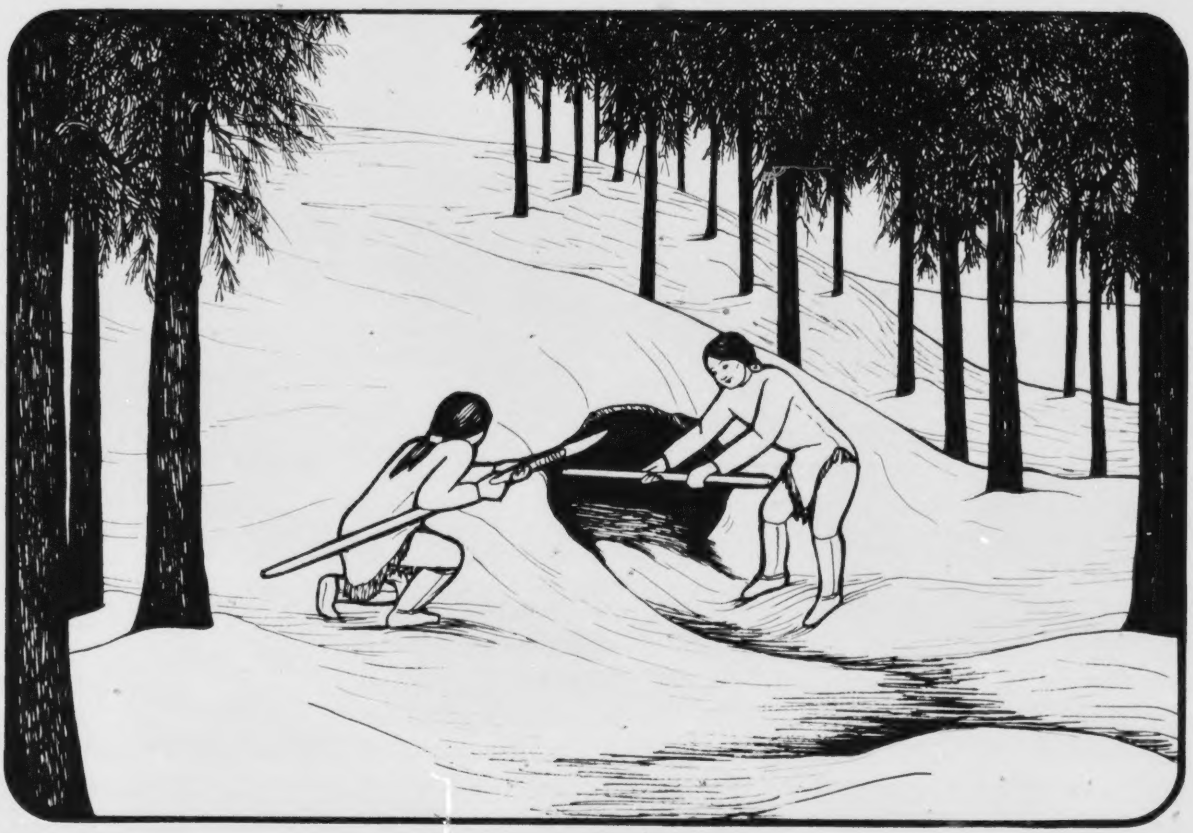
The girl's father looked everywhere for his daughter. He could not find her. Every day he called her and searched for her, but she never returned.



The next year, when the salmon run was about to start again, the rich man set out his fish trap as usual. The first time he checked it, he saw that it was filled with many beautiful salmon. The man threw them all out on the grass, and began cleaning them. He left the smallest fish for last.

Finally, all but the last small fish had been cleaned. The man turned to pick up the little salmon -- and saw that, where the fish had been, there was now a little boy!

The man walked around the boy, staring at him. He walked around him three times. And finally, the third time, he knew why the boy looked familiar. He looked just like the man's lost daughter. The man suddenly knew that this young boy was his grandson, the son of his missing daughter.



CHAPTER IV, "A Bear Hunt"

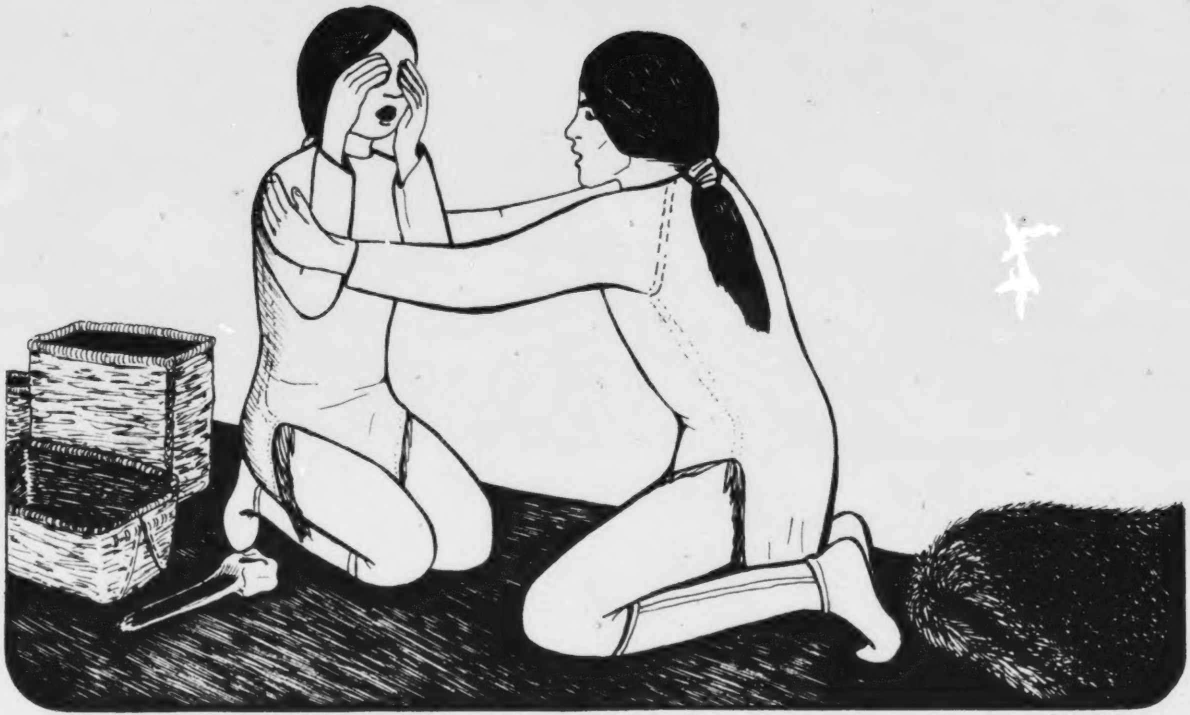
A Koyukon Athabascan man and his son had been out hunting one winter day. On the way back to camp, they discovered a bear hole. The older man stuck the end of his long bear spear into the hole, hoping to wake the bear up and make him leave his hole. He poked and poked, while his son stood nearby with his own spear ready to stab the bear as it came out of the hole.

The bear started growling. The man felt him moving about -- he was going to come out! As the big animal emerged angrily from his den, the two men panicked. The son lunged at him with his sharp-pointed spear. His father followed with another stab at the bear. There was a struggle -- and the bear fell down, and slid back into his den.

The two men were horrified. They knew that after a bear has been killed, its forepaws must be cut off, and its eyes must be burst. Although the bear was dead, its spirit, or yega, could still harm the men if these things were not done.

The man and his son tried to remove the bear from the hole, but it was already dark by this time and the bear was very heavy. They could not pull it out.

The men returned to camp. They felt very worried, because they had not followed the rules. The bear's yega would be angry. Days and weeks went by, and nothing bad happened to either one. Finally, they forgot about the dead bear in its den.



A year later, the son went blind. The people in his band said he had gone blind because he had broken a rule -- he had failed to burst the bear's eye after killing it.

Adapted from Sullivan's The Ten'a Food Quest, 1942: 86.

NEEDZEEK - THE BOY THAT WENT TO THE MOON

Told by Titus David

Collected by
Paul Milanowski

Edited by
Patricia H. Partnow

May 1975

NEEDZEEK - THE BOY THAT WENT TO THE MOON

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Anchorage, Alaska

NEEDZEEK - THE BOY THAT WENT TO THE MOON

PART I

An old lady lived all alone. All her family had been killed by a neighboring band. She kept herself alive by snaring rabbits. Every day she went to check her snares.

One day when she was walking toward the snare line, she heard a child's cry coming from a nearby spruce tree. She hurried over to the tree, and there, lying at its base, was a small baby boy.

She took the baby home with her. She named him "Needzeek," meaning "covered with pitch." She fed him and took care of him. He lived on rabbit soup. He grew up very quickly -- much more quickly than a normal child. Soon he was running around, a big boy.

The old woman taught her grandson, for such she called him, to set rabbit snares. At first he set the snares at the top of spruce trees! Birds flew into the snares, and the boy proudly took them to his grandmother.

She was amazed. "How did you get the birds?" she asked.

"I snared them!" the boy said. He took her to his snare line and showed her the snares, each one up high in a spruce tree.

The grandmother laughed. "But those aren't rabbit snares!" she said. Then she showed him how to cut a spruce fence, how to place the snares along the fence. "This is the way to do it," she told her grandchild. From then on, he set his own snares and became very skilled at catching rabbits.

He also learned to kill bear, and together he and his grandmother lived off the dried rabbit and bear meat. And each time he killed a bear, he was careful to save the bones and gather them together into a bundle.

One day the boy asked his grandmother, "Grandma, why is it that you stay all alone?" His grandmother pretended she did not hear him.

The boy was still curious. Some time later, he again asked her, "Grandma, why is it that you stay all alone?" He kept asking her, over and over again, and finally she told him the story.

"Those people who live over yonder -- they killed my people."

After Needzeek heard the story, he became angry. He began to work very hard from then on, making arrows from the bear bones he had saved. Each bear rib was made into an arrow. As he scraped and shaped the arrows, he sang a song. "Chuuliihii haas haa tł'is tł'is." Day after day, he sat working on his arrows and singing his magic song.

His grandmother listened but did not understand. "I don't know what your song means," she said. Needzeek did not explain. He just continued making arrows and singing.

One day, he was finished with the arrows. He turned to his grandmother and said, "Grandma, I'm going to the camp of the others. I'm going to where the people live who killed your people! None of them will be left alive, not even a little dog! Don't worry about me, Grandma."

Needzeek set out on his trip. As he came near the big lake that was the home of the people, they saw him and said to each other, "Look! Way over there! The orphan boy is coming toward us. We'll club him and get rid of him now."

Needzeek kept walking toward the camp by the lake. The people of the lake ran toward Needzeek, meaning to surround him and kill him. Needzeek just stood there, not showing them his bow and the arrows made of bear bones. As the people came closer, Needzeek took out the weapons, pulled back the bow string, and shot an arrow. As he did so, he said, "Dzeetł'iss." A magic word. He repeated "Dzeetł'iss" every time he shot an arrow. And each arrow hit a person, and the person fell over and died. One by one all the people were killed.

Needzeek returned to his grandmother. "Grandma," he told her, "I killed everyone. None of our enemies is left alive, not even a little dog."

PART II

After that, Needzeek and his grandmother moved to live near some other people. Before they met these other people, Needzeek covered his head and face with pitch. Then he went into the camp to meet the people.

Some of the people in the camp saw that Needzeek was dirty and covered with pitch, and they made fun of him. But others accepted him, even though he was dirty.

Needzeek and his grandmother lived for a long time with these people. The young men went caribou hunting with them. One time, they were very close to the caribou and they said to each other, "Shhh, the caribou are up on top of the hill!" Needzeek sprang up and went running after the caribou -- and he chased them all away! The other hunters were furious.

Then Needzeek made up his mind. He went home and with the help of his grandmother washed off all the pitch and dirt. He put on clean clothes, got out new snowshoes, and put a feather in his hair. He returned to the caribou hunt.

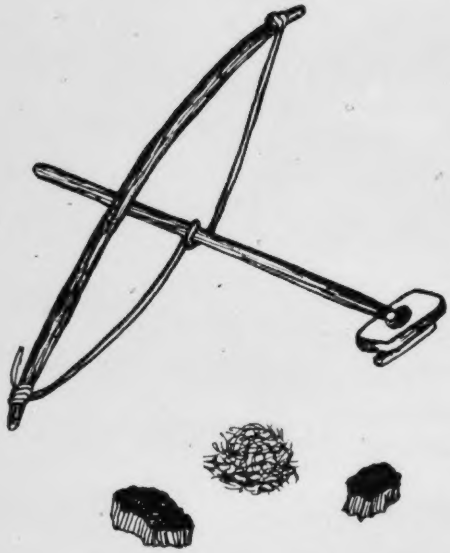
All the people looked at him. They almost did not recognize him. Needzeek went after the caribou, and one after another he killed them. There was meat in the camp that night!

Needzeek served his meat according to the way the people had treated him. Those who had made fun of him were thrown their food. Those who had loved him were served well and had much to eat.

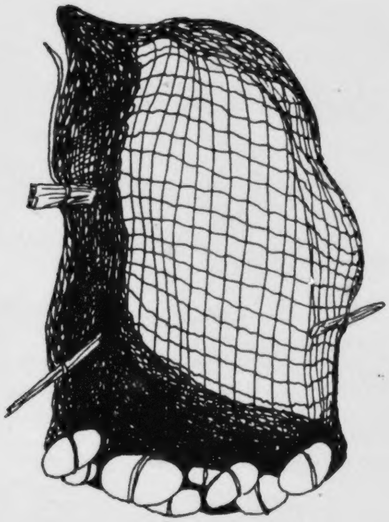
After the people had eaten, they said to Needzeek, "Now you take what meat you want!"

"I don't want any meat," he answered. "Just give me the caribou fat."

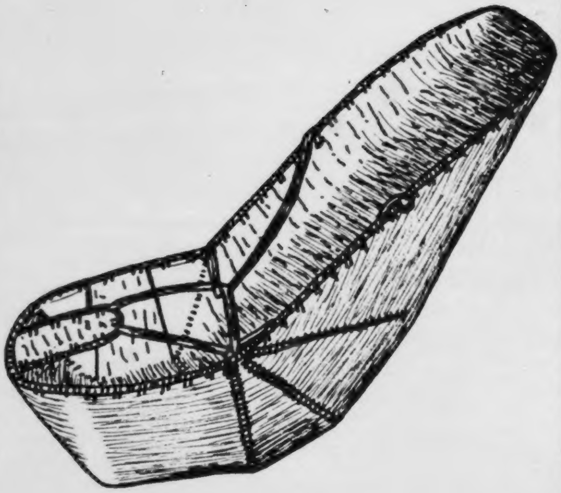
In spite of all that Needzeek had done for them, they would not give him the caribou fat. But that night, during the full moon, they saw him rise up in the sky and step into the moon with the fat in his hand. And you can still see him there on a clear night!



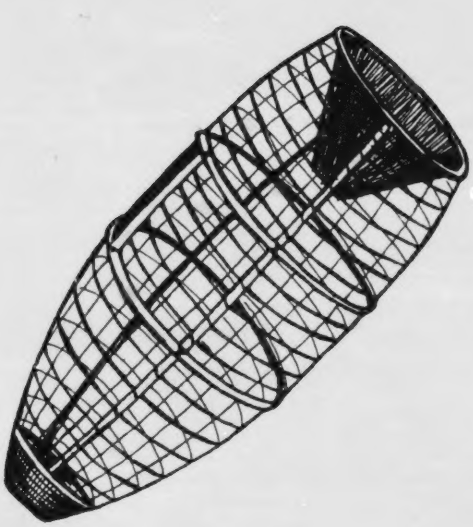
FIRE DRILL



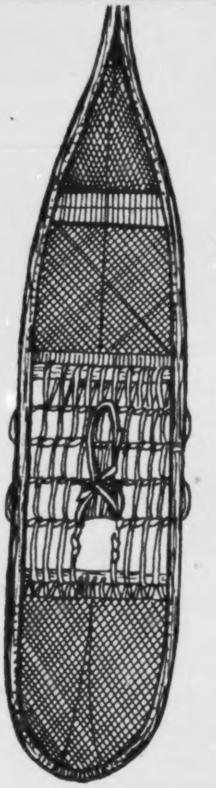
GILL NET



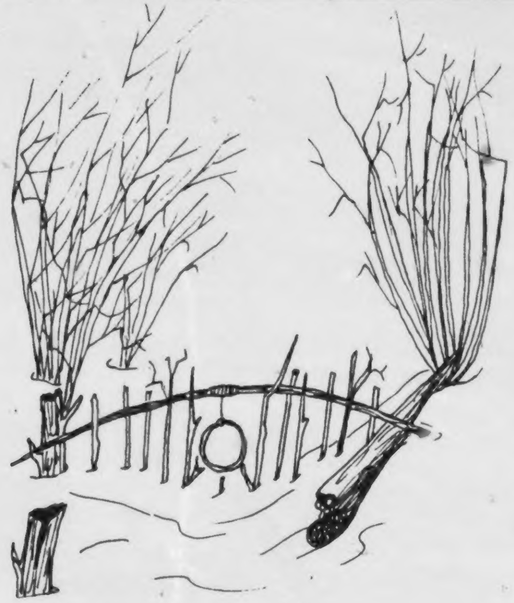
BABY CARRIER



FISH TRAP

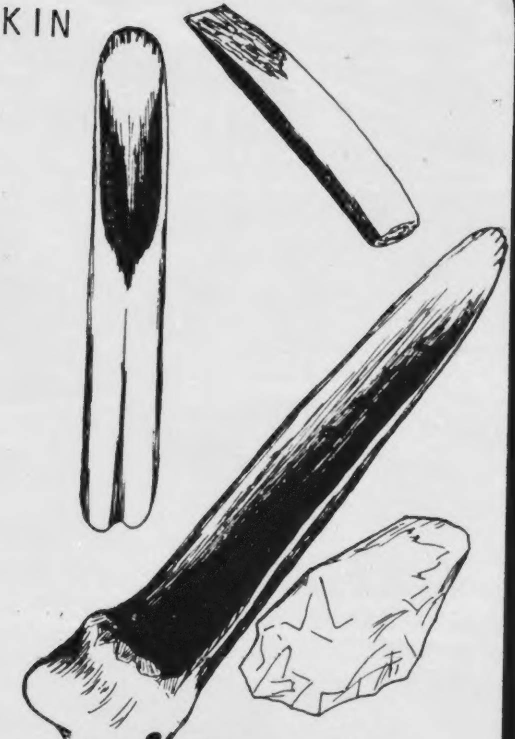


SNOWSHOES

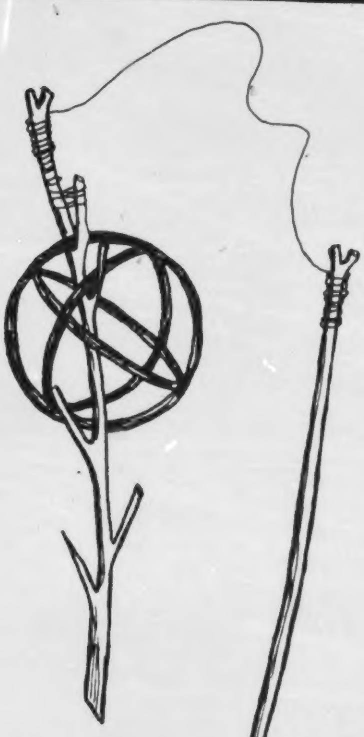


SNARE

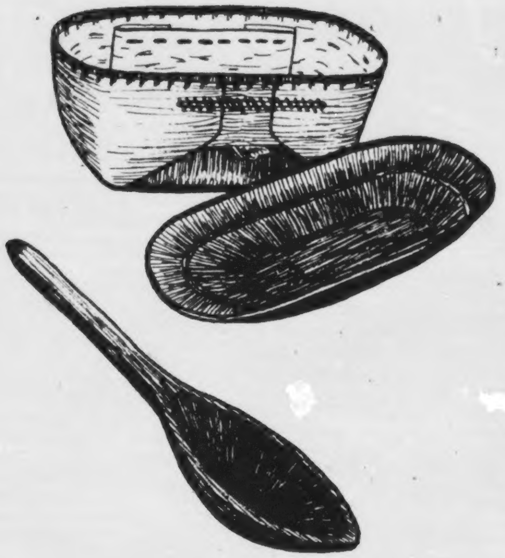
SKIN



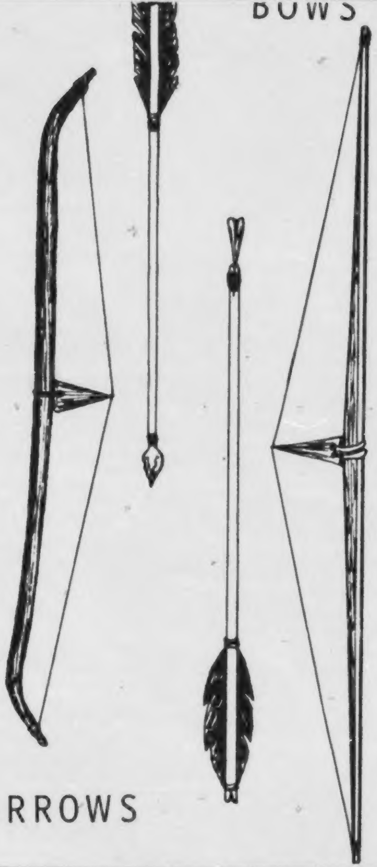
SCRAPERS



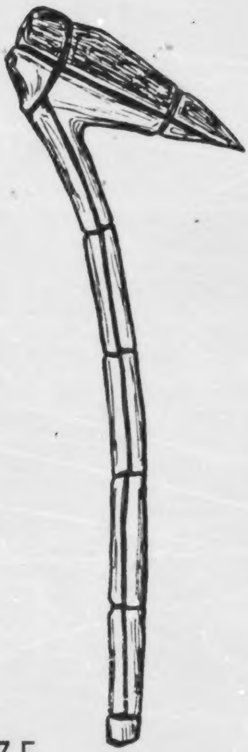
HOOP GAME



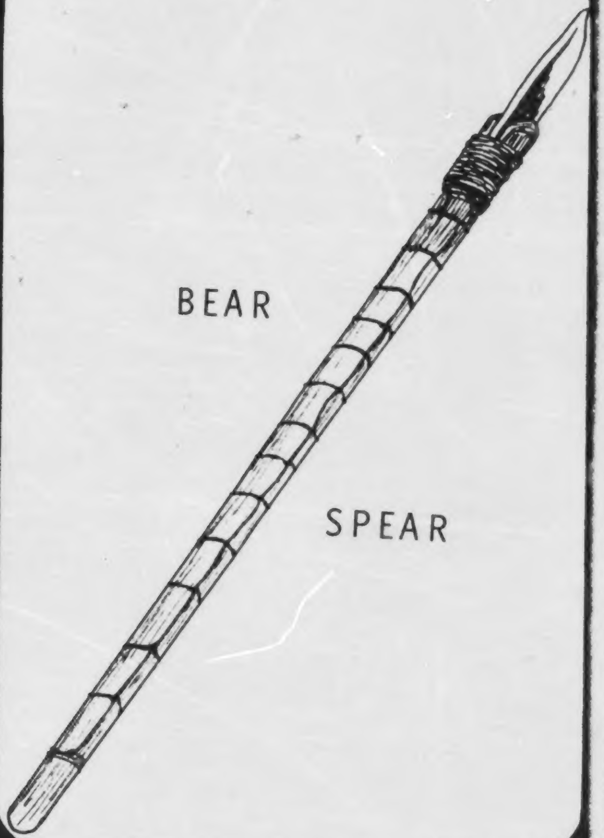
CONTAINERS



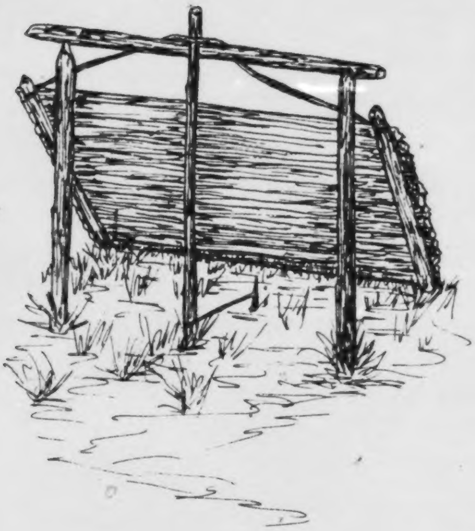
BOWS AND ARROWS



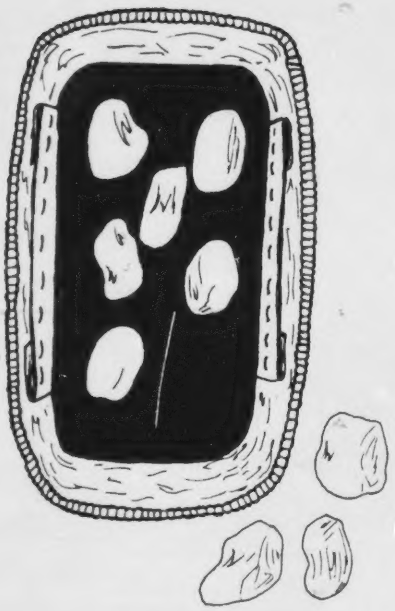
ADZE



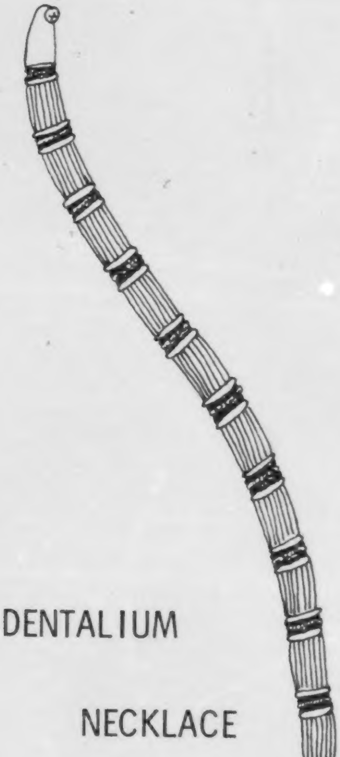
BEAR SPEAR



DEADFALL

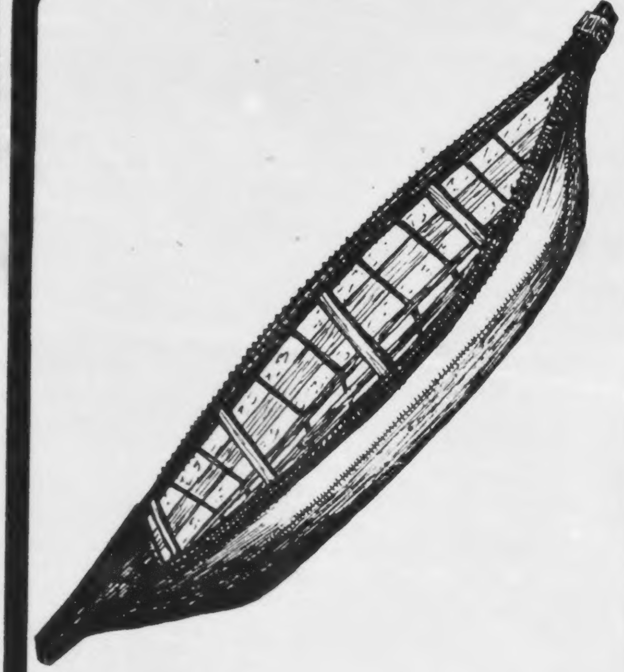


BOILING STONES



DENTALIUM

NECKLACE



BIRCH BARK CANOE

BEFORE THE HUNT

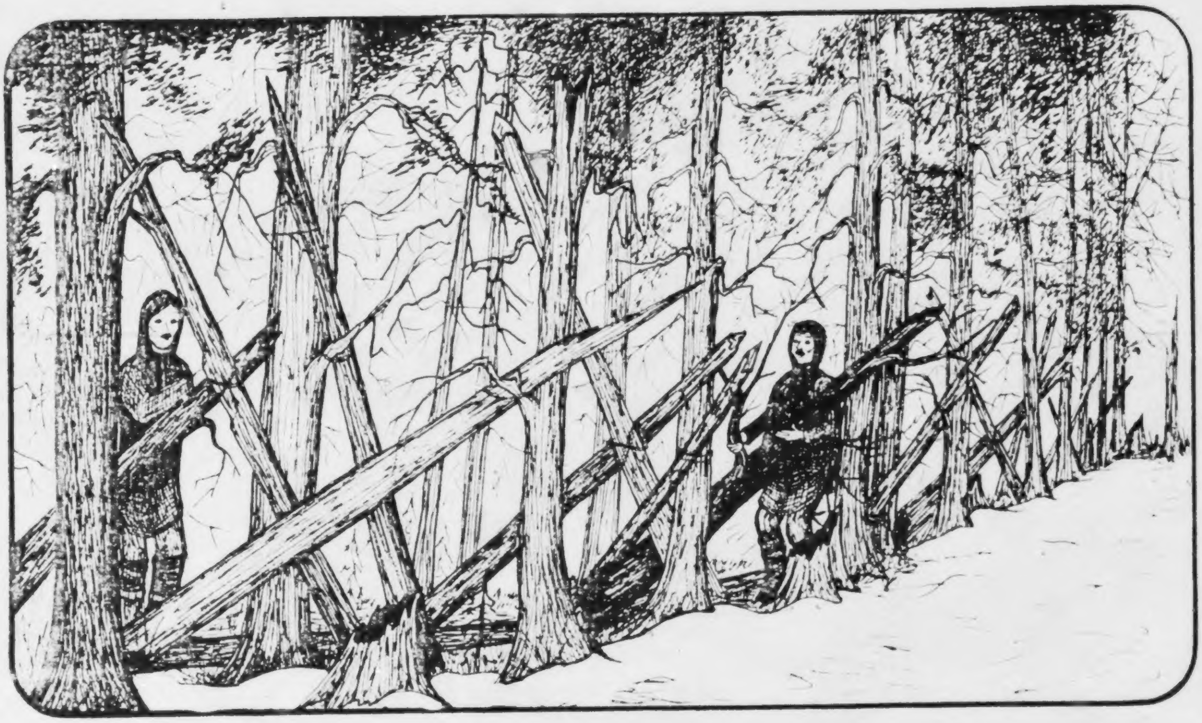
By

Pat Partnow

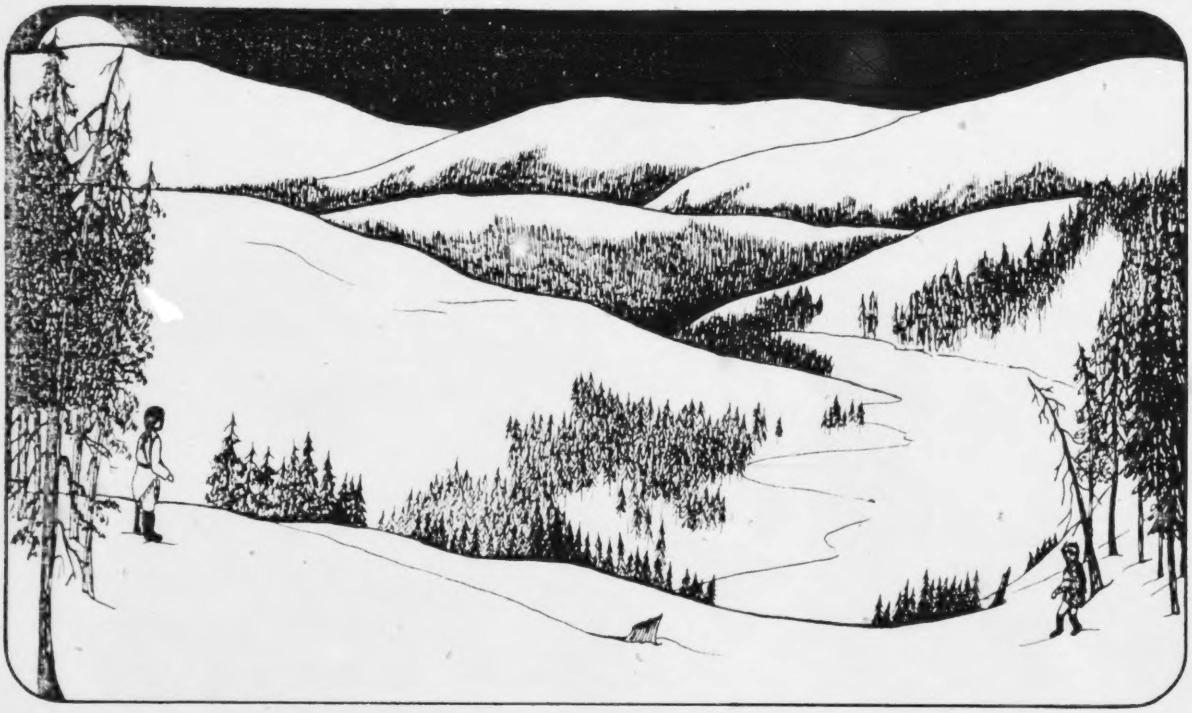
Illustrator
Jeanette Bailey

Book 3

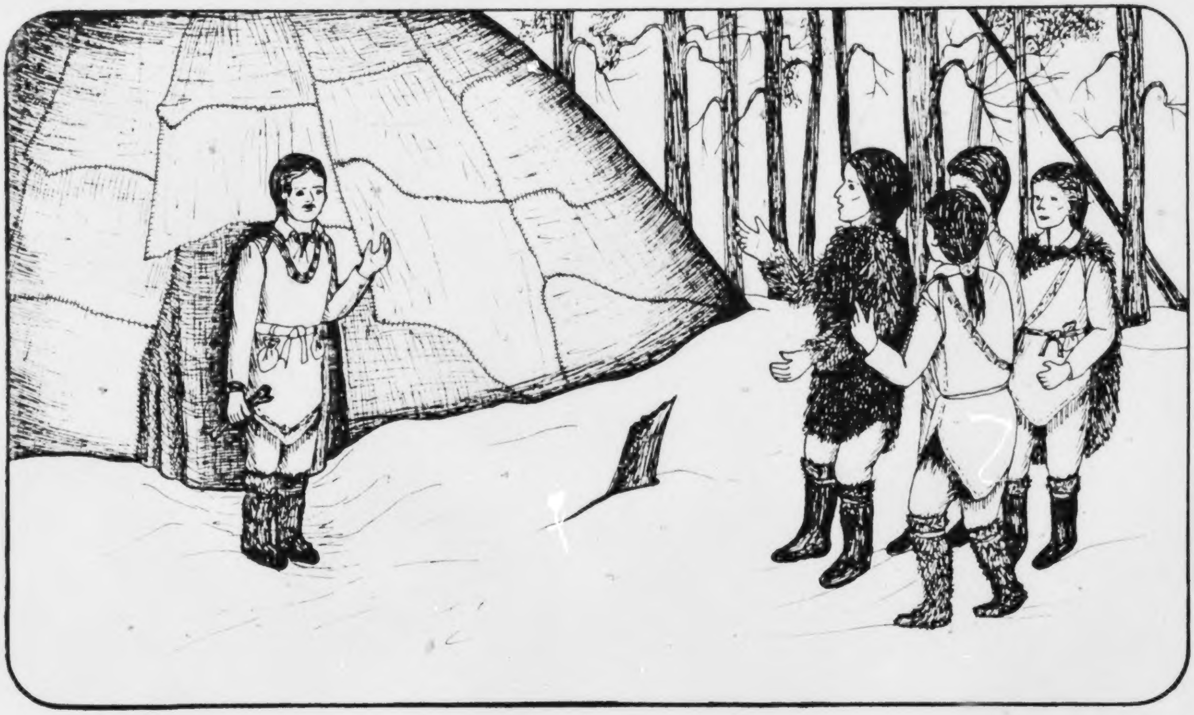
It was Fall in Gwich'in Territory, and the time was drawing near for the caribou hunt. Each year at this time the caribou herds moved south, through the mountain passes and across the river into the wooded wintering grounds. The people looked forward to killing many caribou as they passed through the area. They needed meat to last through the winter, and they needed furs for clothing.



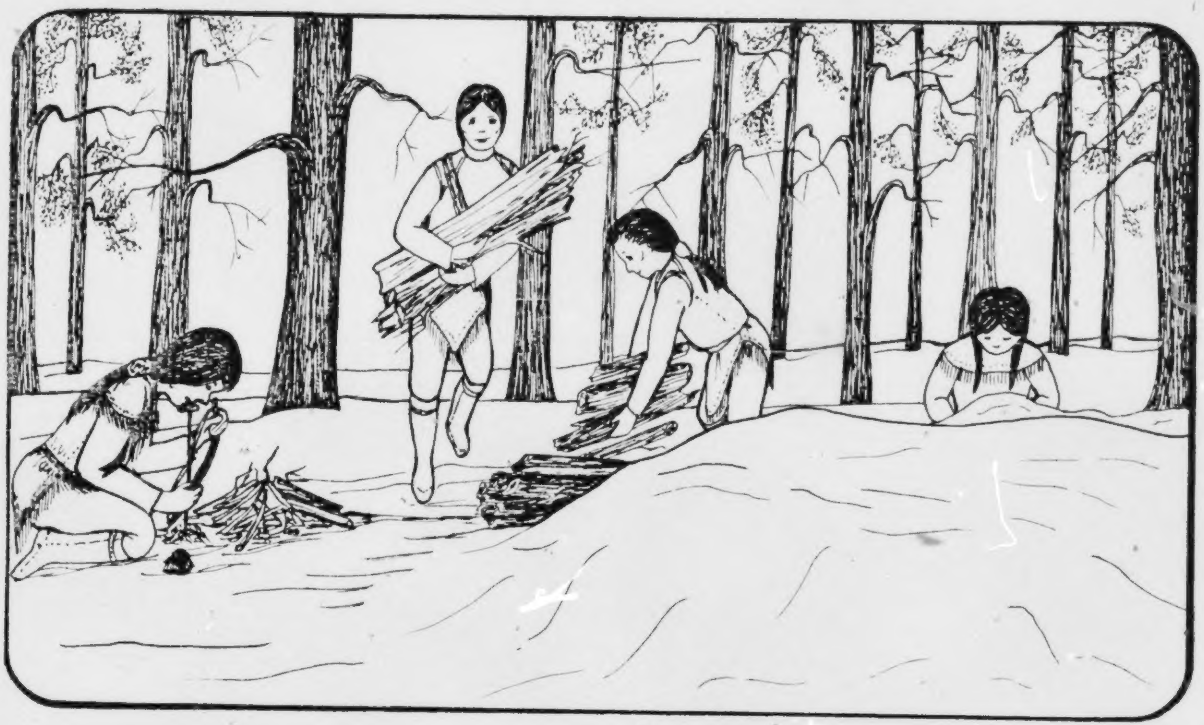
Groups of men went out from the main camp every day to repair the long caribou fence. They wanted to be ready for the herds when they came. A broken caribou fence meant that many of the animals could escape, and the kill would be poor.



As the days went by, young men were stationed at lookout points up on the tops of the foothills so they could tell the band members when the first caribou came into view. They watched from their lookouts day after day, but none came. The band members became restless. They sent the lookouts out again. The young men came back with nothing to report.



Finally, the adults got together and decided that it was time to ask for help from a medicine man -- someone who was able to speak directly with the spirits of the caribou. A medicine man could convince the spirits to send the caribou near camp so the coming hunt would be a good one.



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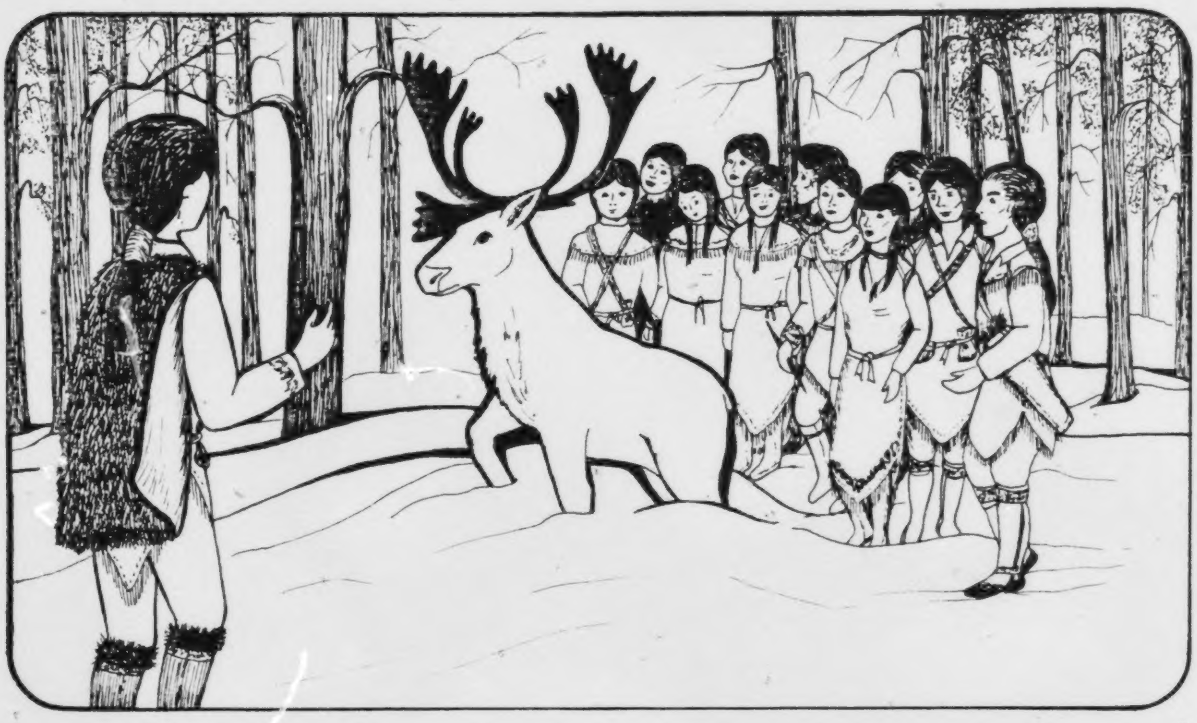
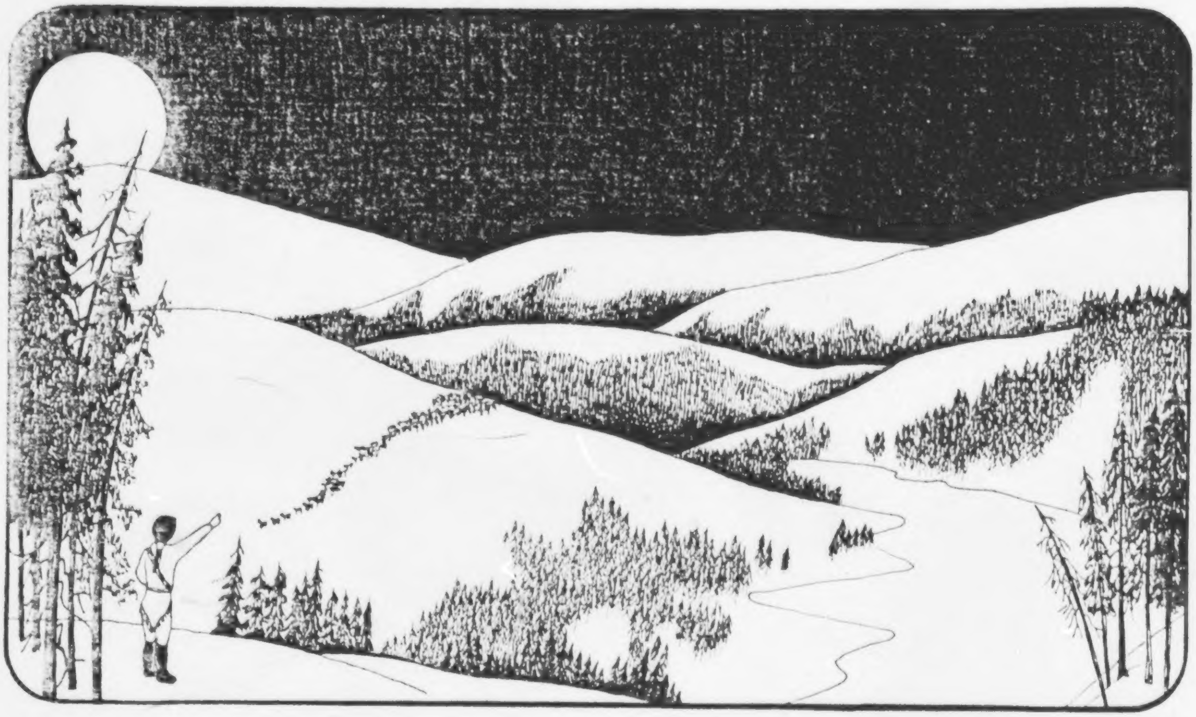
The medicine man agreed to perform. He had his helpers pile up a big mound of snow outside. Then he had them build a fire near the snow pile. As the fire began to glow, the people gathered around it and the mound of snow, and waited for the medicine man to begin.



The medicine man stepped into the center of the circle the people had formed. He walked around the fire. He began to sing. Then he walked up to the pile of snow, and rolled the sleeve of his parka up to his elbow. He stuck his arm into the pile of snow. The people could see him struggling. He had hold of something under the snow. Suddenly, he pulled a full-grown caribou half-way out of the snow mound! The people gasped in surprise. The medicine man then pushed the animal back into the snow, until no sign of it could be seen.



After that, the people felt sure
that their caribou hunt would be a good one.

BEFORE THE HUNT

Adapted from McKennan, The Chandalar Kutchin (1965:80).

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Book 3 of the

Athabascan Indians of Interior Alaska

Social Studies Unit

A VIEW OF THE PAST

Written by
Patricia H. Partnow

Illustrated by
Michael D. Jimerson

as part of the
Athabascan Indians of Interior Alaska
Social Studies Unit

May 1975

A VIEW OF THE PAST

A Production of the

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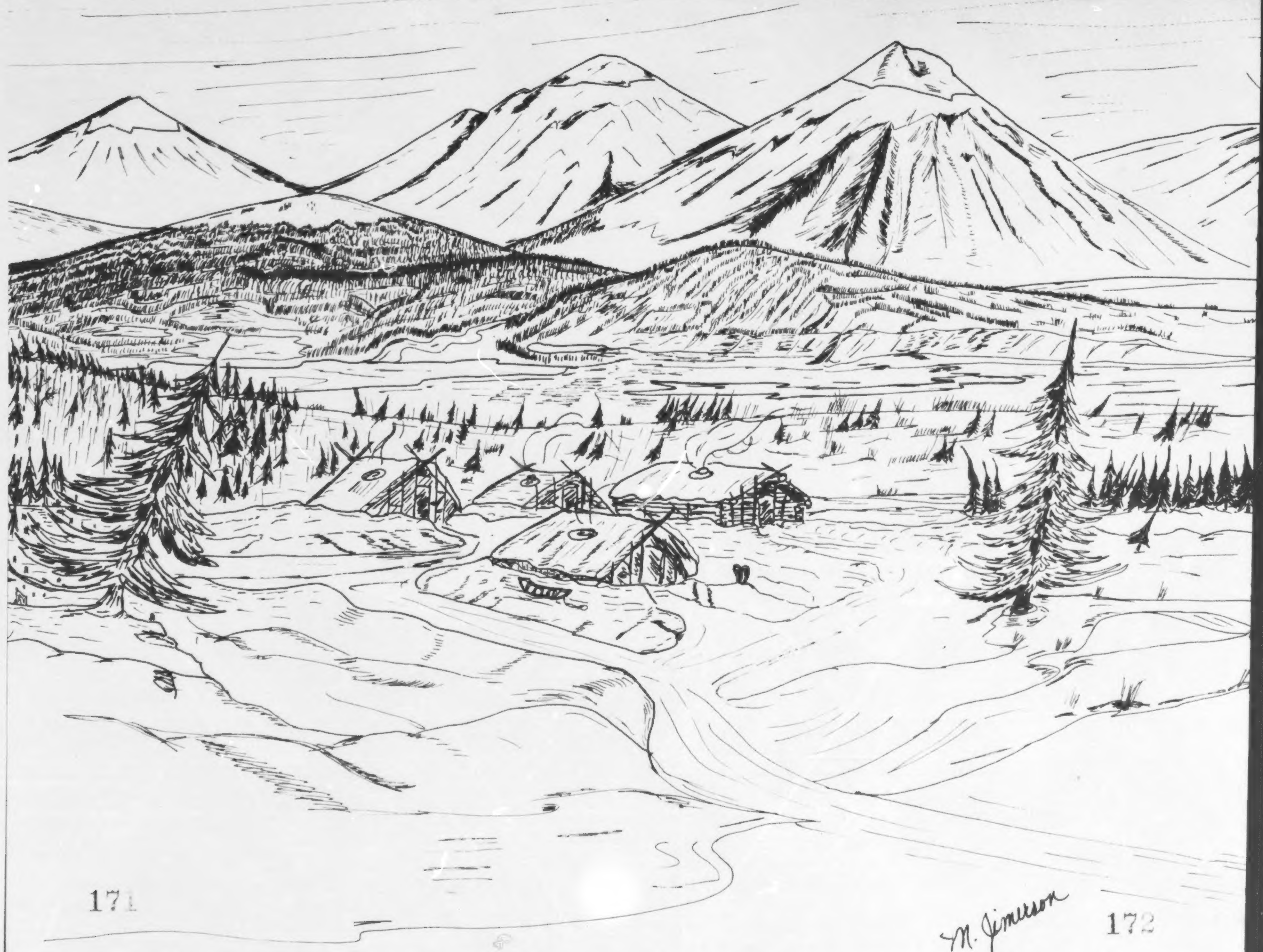
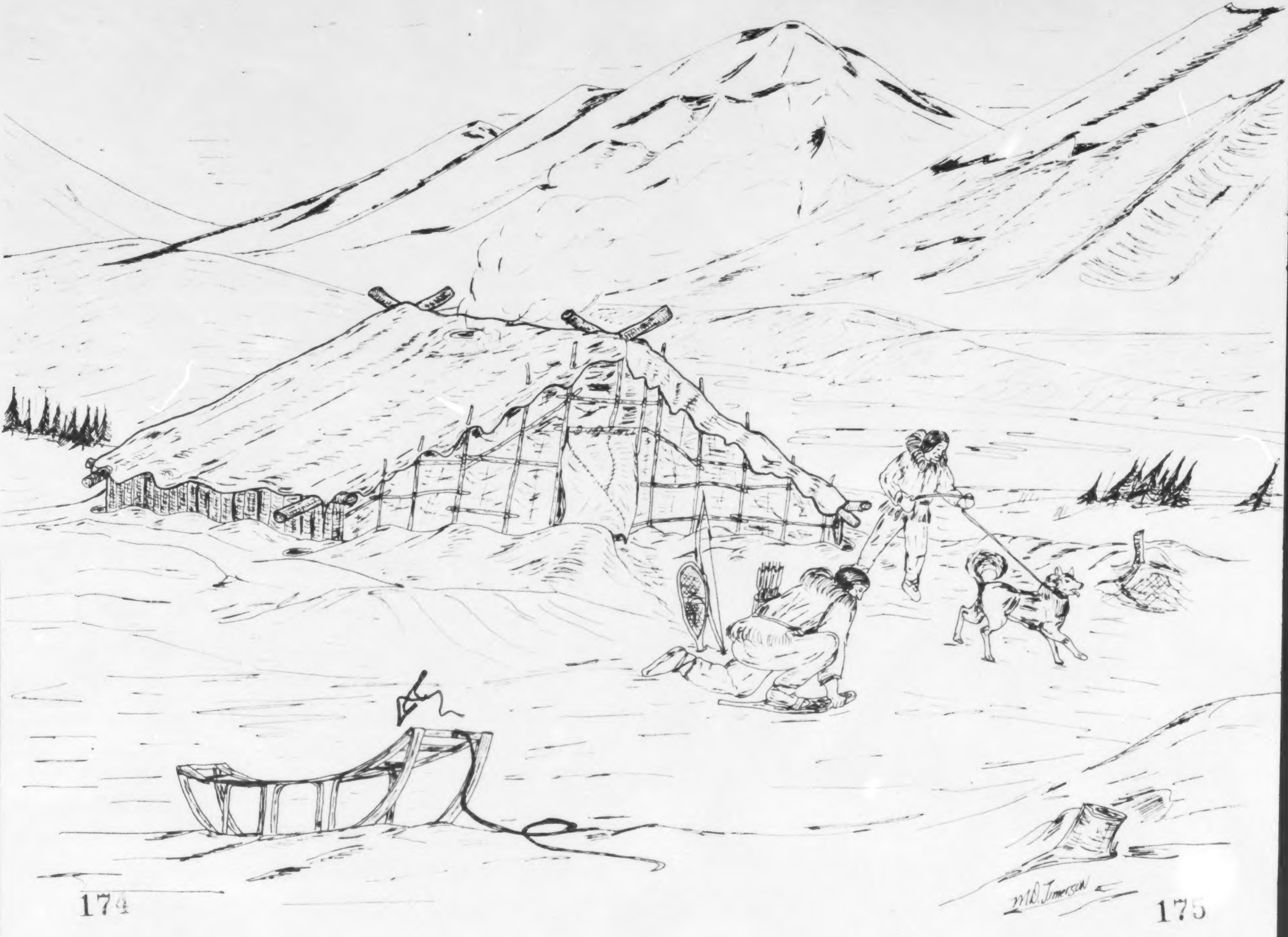
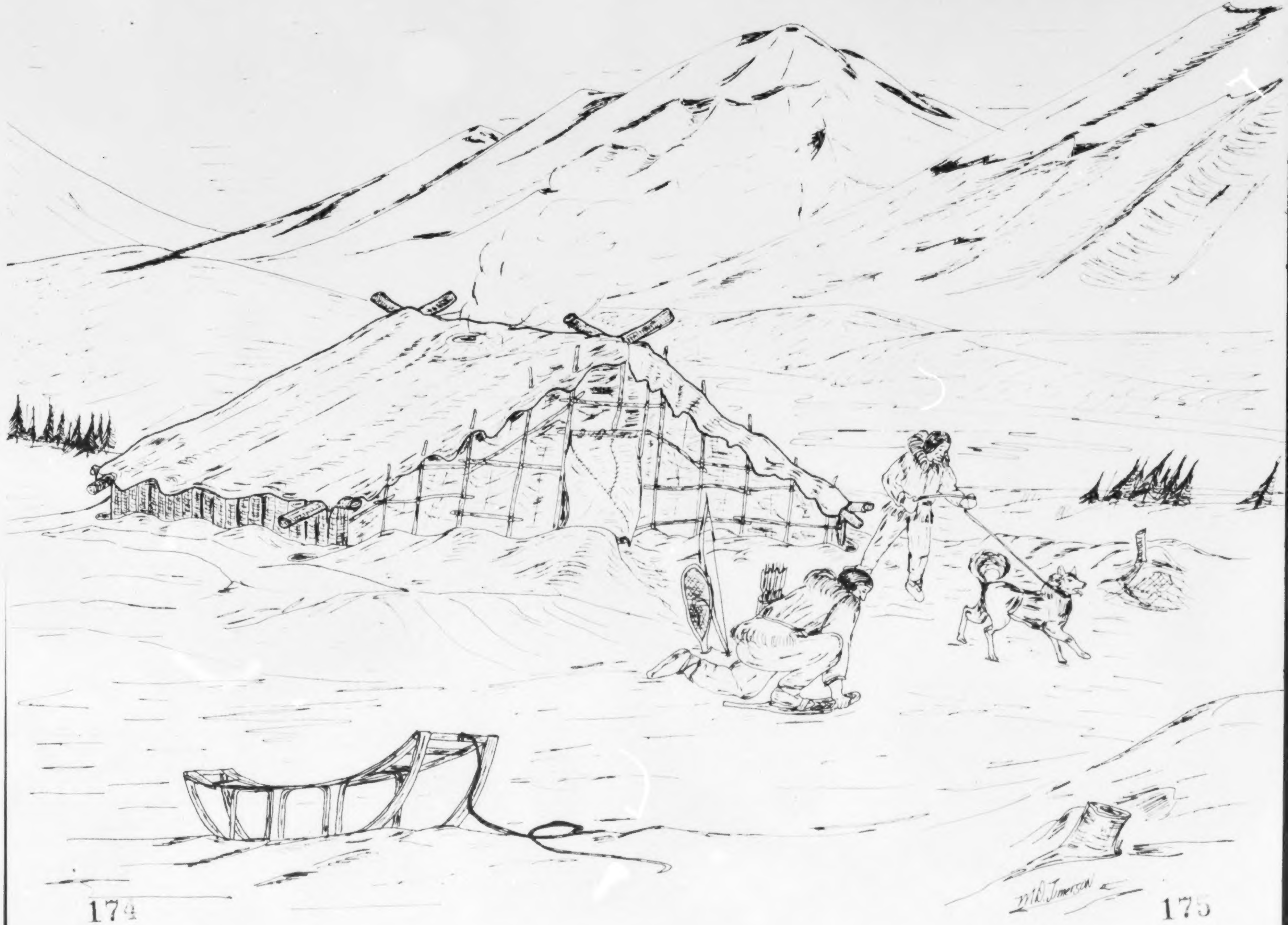
It's a cold, still morning in November two hundred years ago. In the interior of what is now known as Alaska, the rivers and lakes have been frozen for several weeks. Snow covers the ground and clings to the short branches of the spruce trees.


M. Jimerson

In a clearing, set back from the river a bit, are four snow-covered houses -- mounds of white with smoke curling out of holes in the tops.

This camp is an Athabascan winter camp. Relatives and good friends, all members of the same band, have decided to stay at the same camp this winter and have built their moss-covered houses close together.

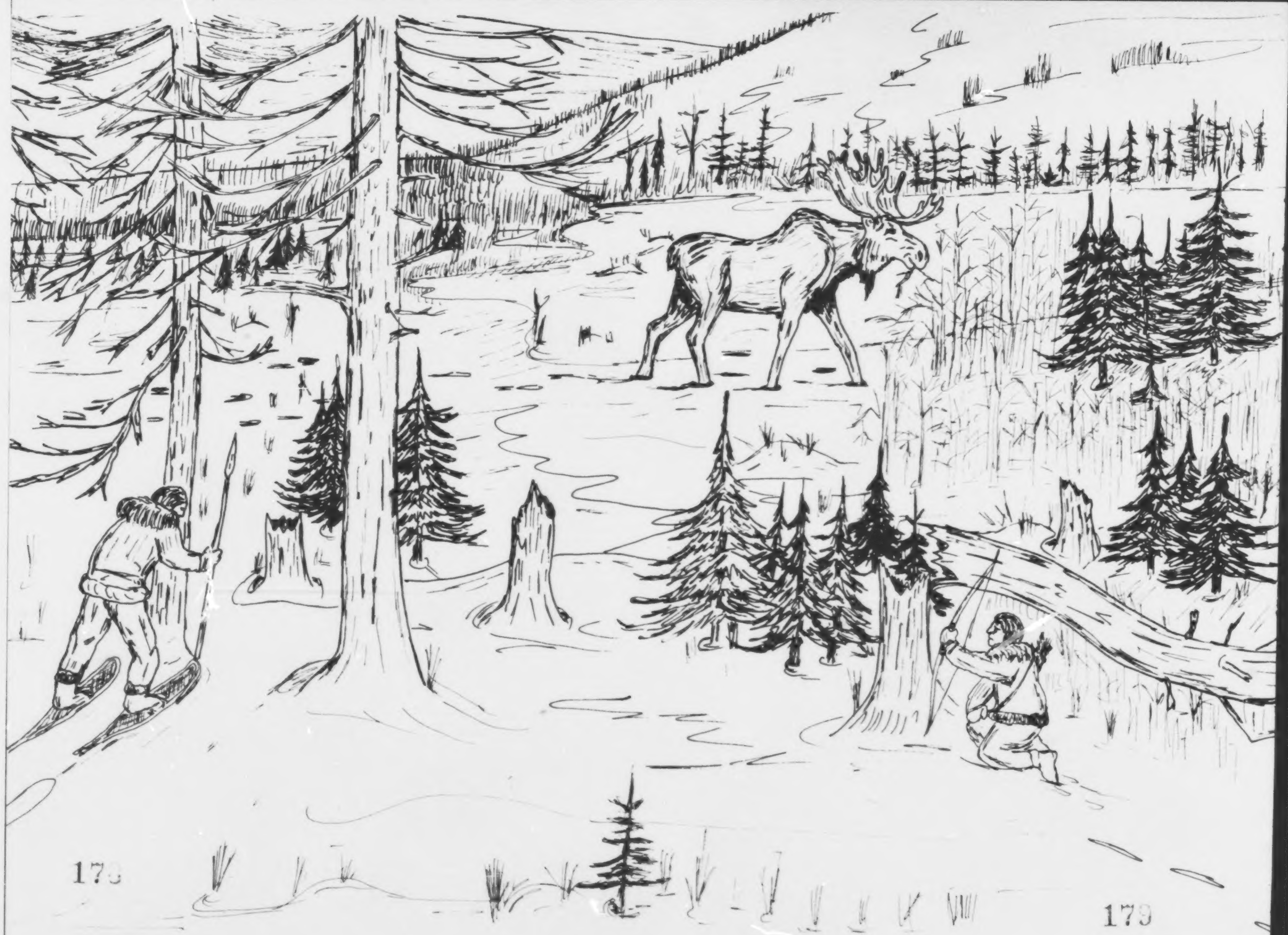

M.D. Jimerson


M.D. Timerson

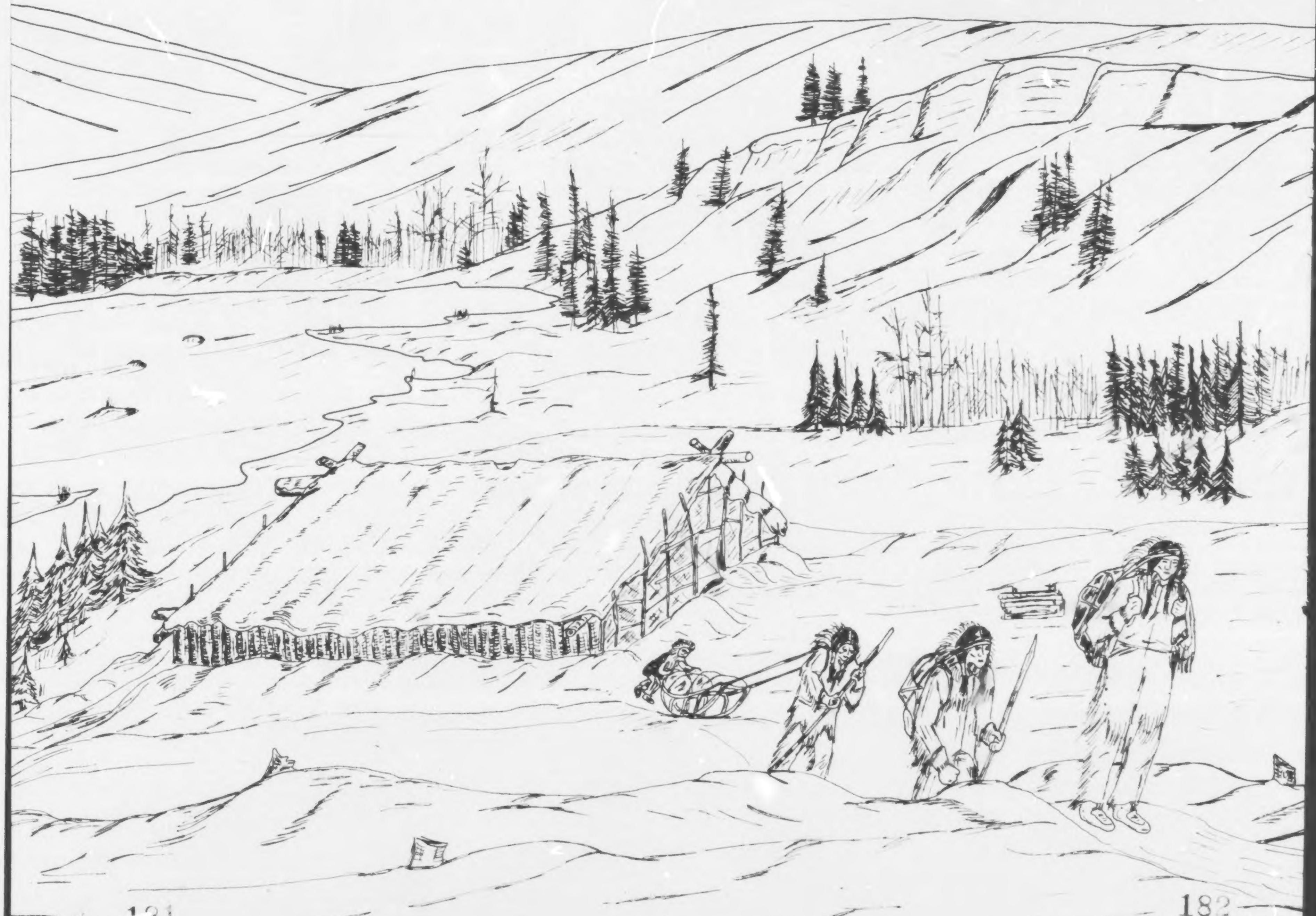
Two men come out of one of the houses carrying bows, arrows, and sinew snares. Laughing and talking to each other, they put on long snowshoes, untie a barking dog, and set off with it across the frozen river and into the forest on the other bank.

A woman, bundled in a caribou-skin parka, follows them out of the house and walks down to the river to get water.

A third man walks downriver a bit and checks his fish net under the ice. Soon the ice will be too thick for netting and it will be time to jig. But for now the winter run of whitefish is still filling the nets.

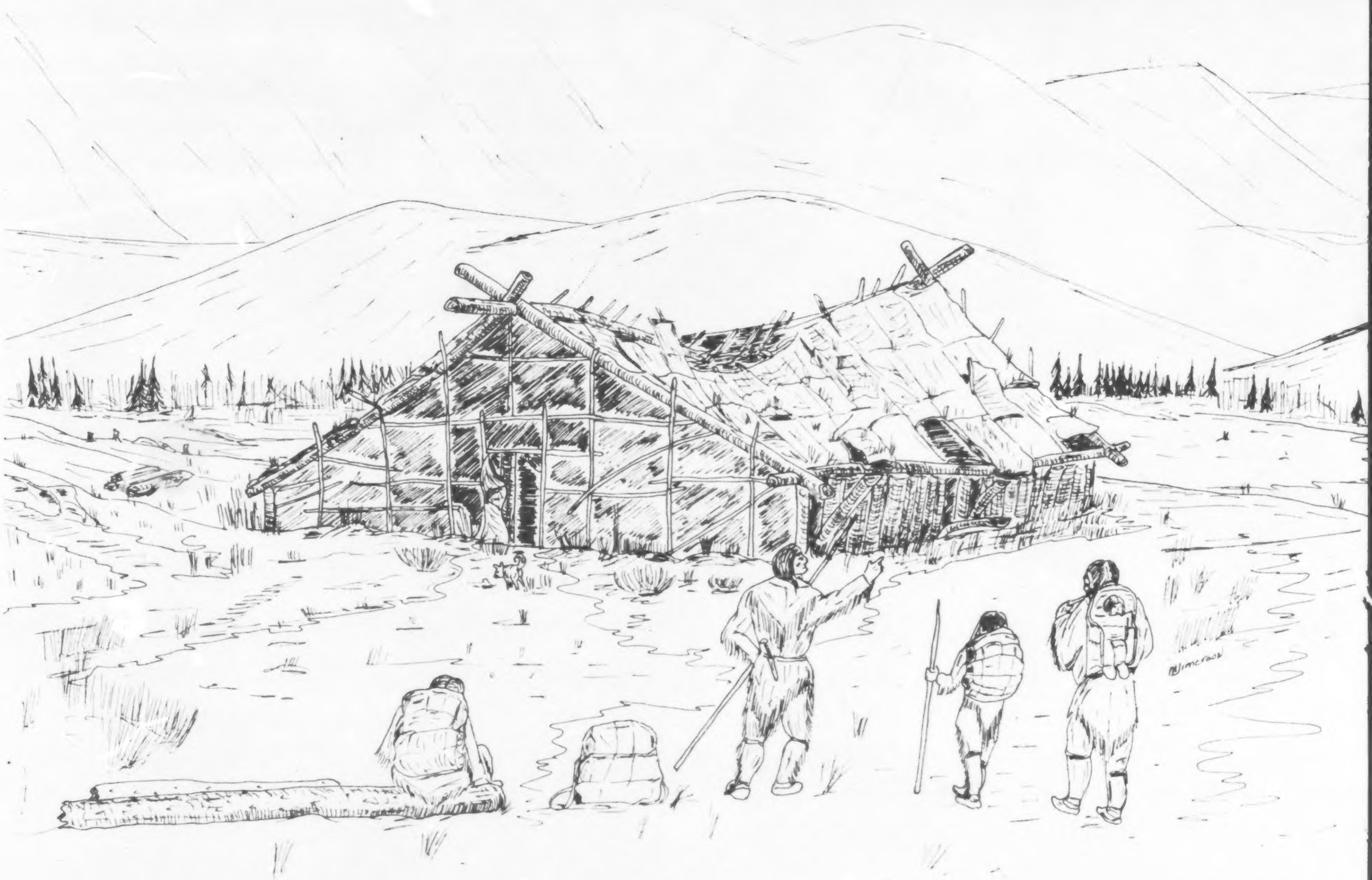


There are both big and small game animals in the area. It is also a good fishing spot, and close to the migration route of a herd of caribou.

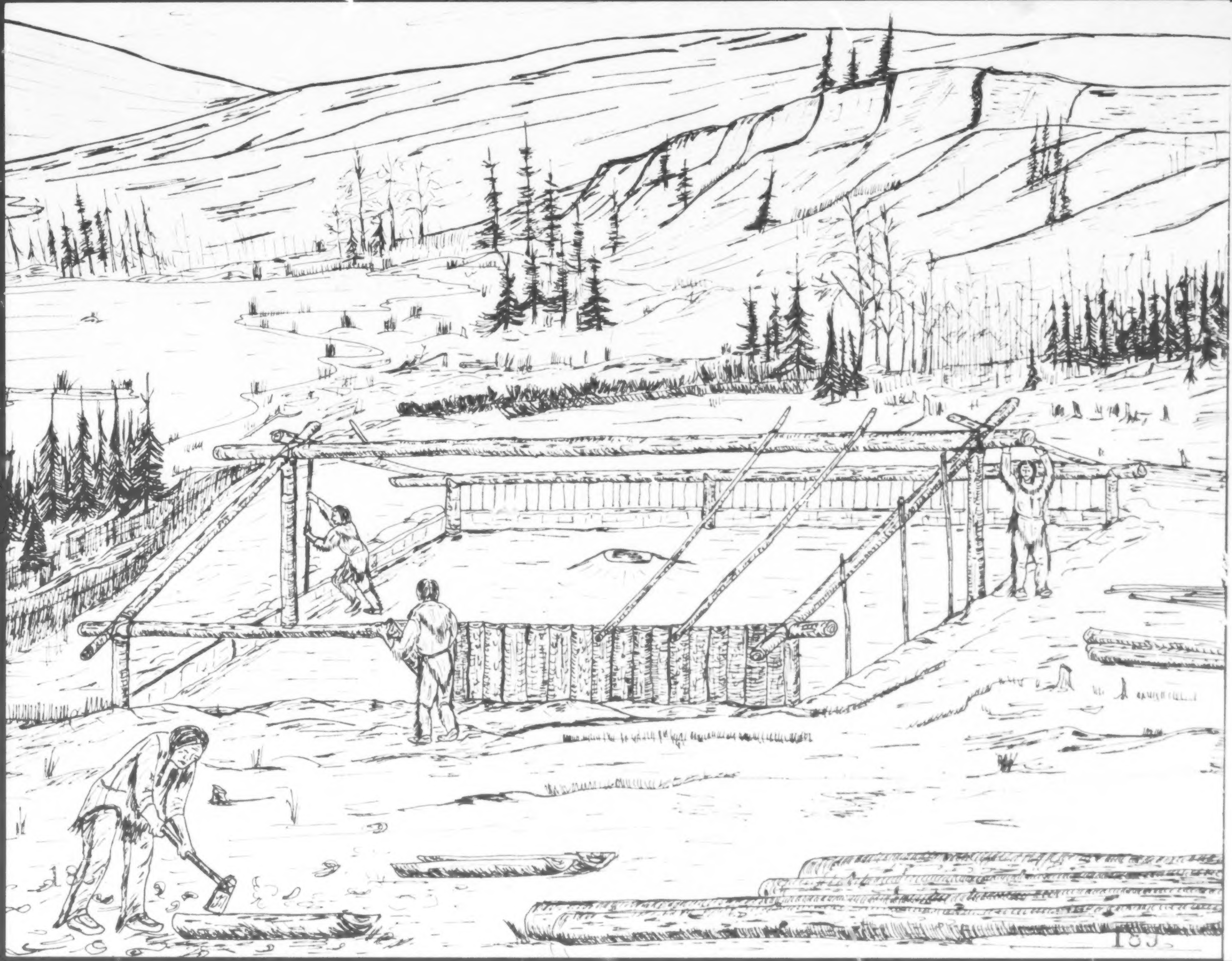


Each of the houses in this winter camp is home for two families. In one household, the two families decided to live together because the wives are sisters and their husbands get along with each other. In another, a married daughter and her husband are sharing a house with her parents. And in still another, the two men are hunting partners and good friends, and so decided to share a house.

These Athabascans will hunt and fish for awhile, but later on this winter they will break camp and split up. Each household will go to its own pond or lake to trap beavers, or will travel to a favorite hunting spot. When they move out of their winter camp, they will carry their tents, tools, clothes, and weapons with them. They'll leave only the houses themselves, still covered with snow.



As spring comes and the snow melts at this winter camp, the moss and dirt that cover the houses will become wet and heavy. Water will drip through the planks on the roof, onto the dirt floor inside. By summer, the poles that held the roofs up will fall down under the weight of the soggy roof.



When the people return next fall they will be glad to see their friends and relatives again. They will see that the old houses have fallen down, and will start the work of building new ones. They will be busy with the houses, with fishing and hunting and getting ready for the winter. It is a good time of year!

NORTHERN

VOLUME I NO. 1 ANCHORAGE

SCIENTISTS FIND

A group of scientists, hired to study animals along the proposed route of a natural gas pipeline, have found 48 caribou fences in Alaska and the Yukon Territory.

The fences were used by Athabascan Indians to trap caribou as they migrated to the wintering grounds in the forests.

Some of the fences were 200 or 300 years old, scientists reported.

Some were several miles long. The Athabascans have not used place in the 1930's.

The fences were made by lashing spruce poles to living trees.

The fences were shaped like huge funnels. At one end, the sides of the fence are far apart. The two fences get closer together, until they join to form a circle or surround.

Women and children chased the caribou into the wide end of the surround, and kept chasing them until they

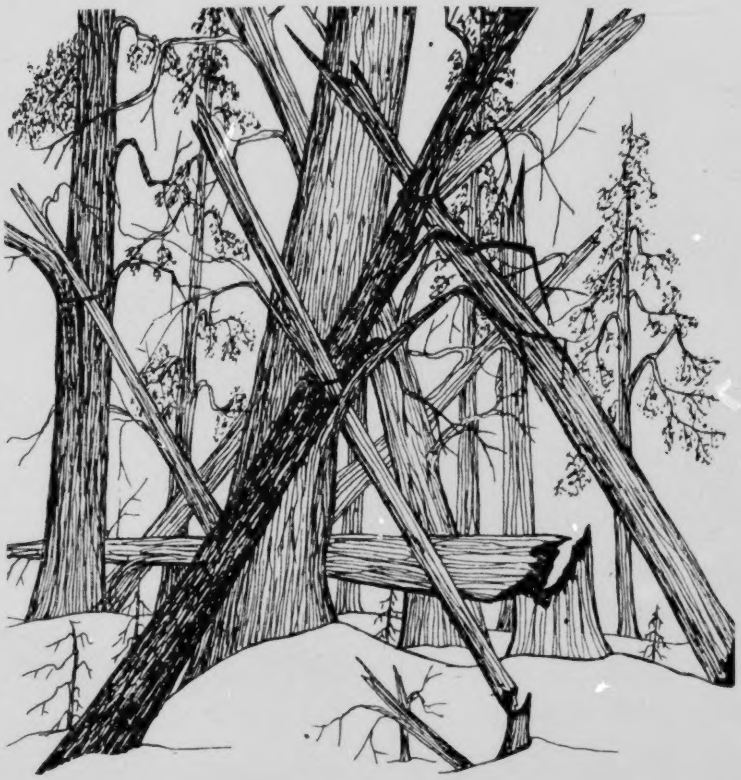
CHRONICLE

ALASKA MAY 1, 1975 SINGLE COPY

CARIBOU SURROUNDS

were close to the end. Then men would take er. They stood with ws and arrows and ears, waiting for the caribou. When the herd was finally trapped in the surround, the men then killed as many as 400 of the animals in a single hunt.

Snares were hung just inside the caribou fence. Any animals that escaped the men's aim were tangled in the snares to be killed by hunters.



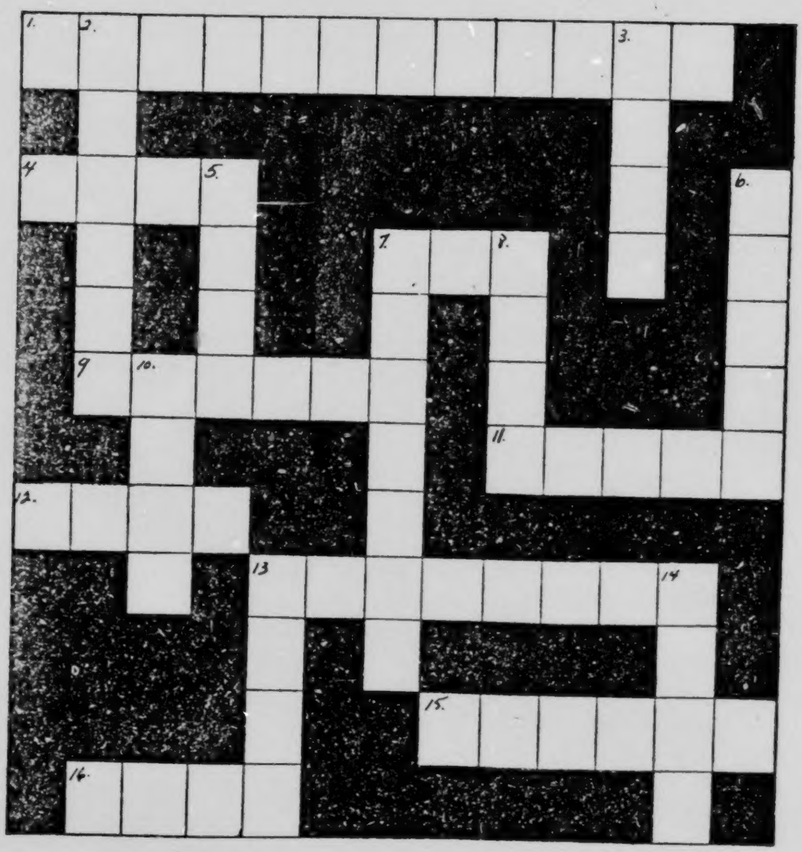
CARIBOU CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Down

2 Caribou state
3 Head rests on
5 Hoofs
6 Traditional method of catching Caribou
7 Reindeer (Alaska)
8 Preditor of Caribou
10 Smeller
13 Opposite of tame
14 Animal family Caribou belongs to

Across

1 Tundra Caribou
4 Baby Caribou
7 Mother Caribou
9 Caribou Rack
11 Surround
12 Caribou eats
13 Timber Caribou
15 Caribou moss is actually a _____
16 Group of Caribou



CARIBOU DIET

In the winter, caribou eat lichen - often called 'caribou moss'. An adult needs 12 pounds of lichen a day, and must paw away the snow with its wide hoofs to find the food.

CARIBOU MIGRATIO

Barren Ground Caribou migrate from 2,000 to 4,000 miles a year. The go from the forest to the tundra in the spring, the down to the edge of the forest again in summer.

During the matin season in October, the animals move up into the tundra again.

Finally, in the fall, they move to their wintering grounds in the trees. The prefer wooded areas in the winter because the snow is soft and easy to paw away to find the lichen underneath.

FURRIER CONVENTION HERE

The Furriers of the North Convention was held here Friday, with furriers from all over Alaska and Canada attending.

Keynote speaker Amos Paul spoke on the coat of the caribou. Each year a different fur is featured.

Paul commented on the warmth of caribou hides. "They make the warmest coats you can get," he stated. The reason for their great warmth lies in the hair itself. Each one is hollow and so traps warm air which serves as insulation. Paul said that caribou live in the world's coldest climates, and need warm hair to survive the winters.

Wanda Cleveland, a biologist attending the conference, added that the hollow hairs of the caribou allow the animals to swim easily, something which they must do in their yearly migrations across tundra, rivers, and lakes.

"The air trapped in the hair makes the animals bouyant," she explained. "As if they were wearing innertubes. And it keeps their bodies warm in the water, too."

The conference ended with a banquet. Caribou roast was the main course.

* * *

Caribou calves are able to outrun a man when they are just two days old.

TETLIN AS I KNEW IT

written by

Shirley David Jimerson

edited by

Patricia H. Partnow

illustrated by

Michael Jimerson

1975

TETLIN AS I KNEW IT

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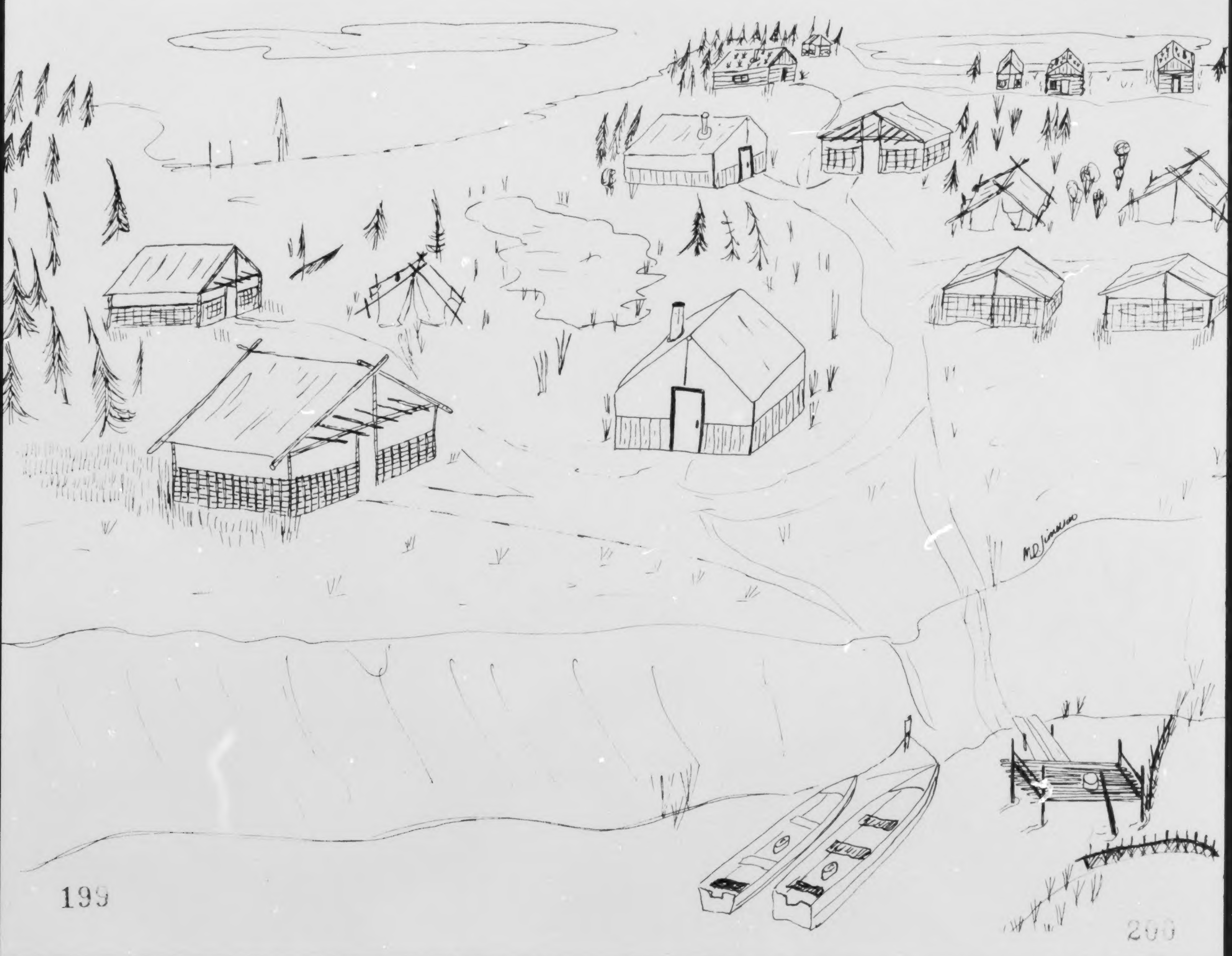


Chapter I

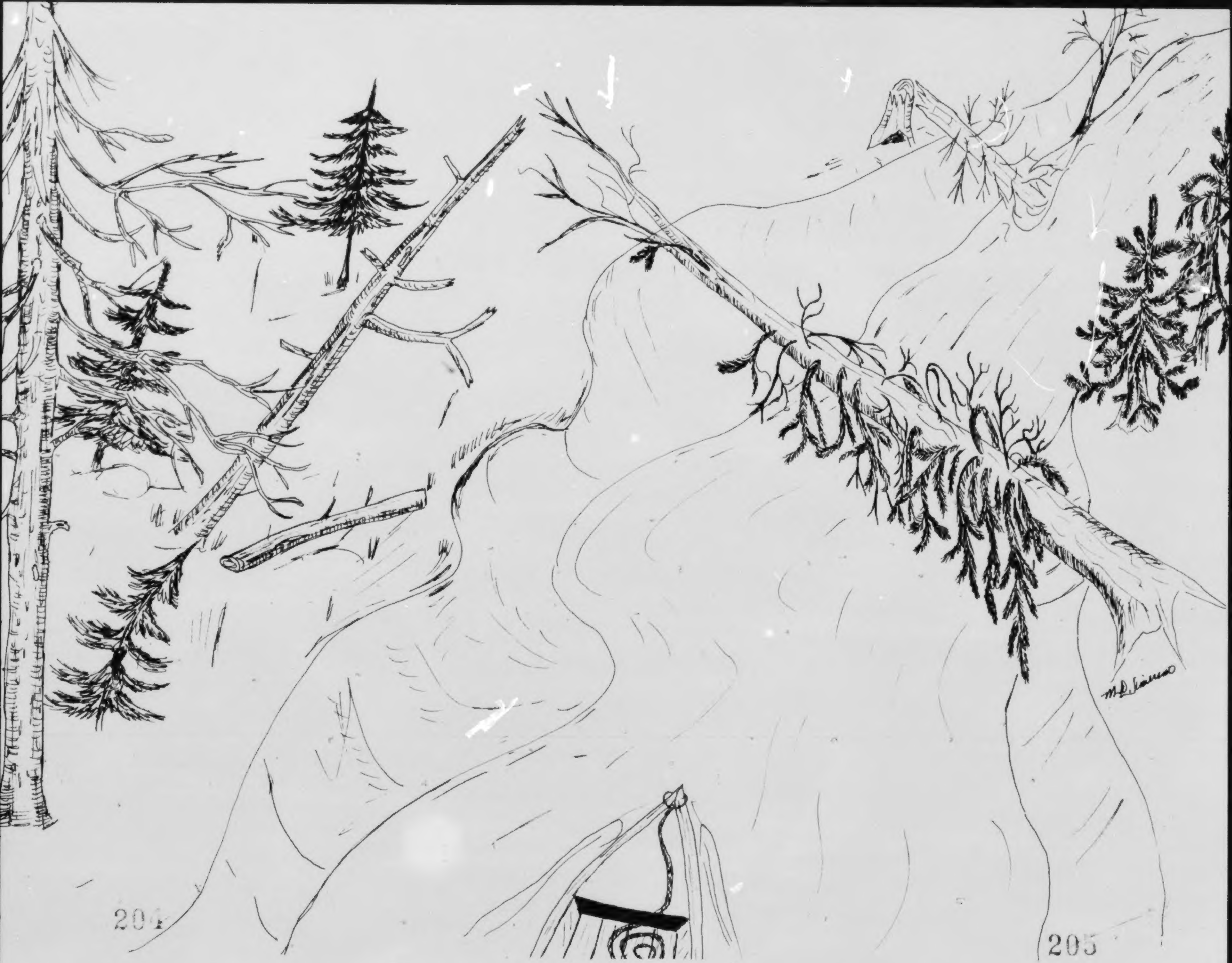
A Trip Around Tetlin

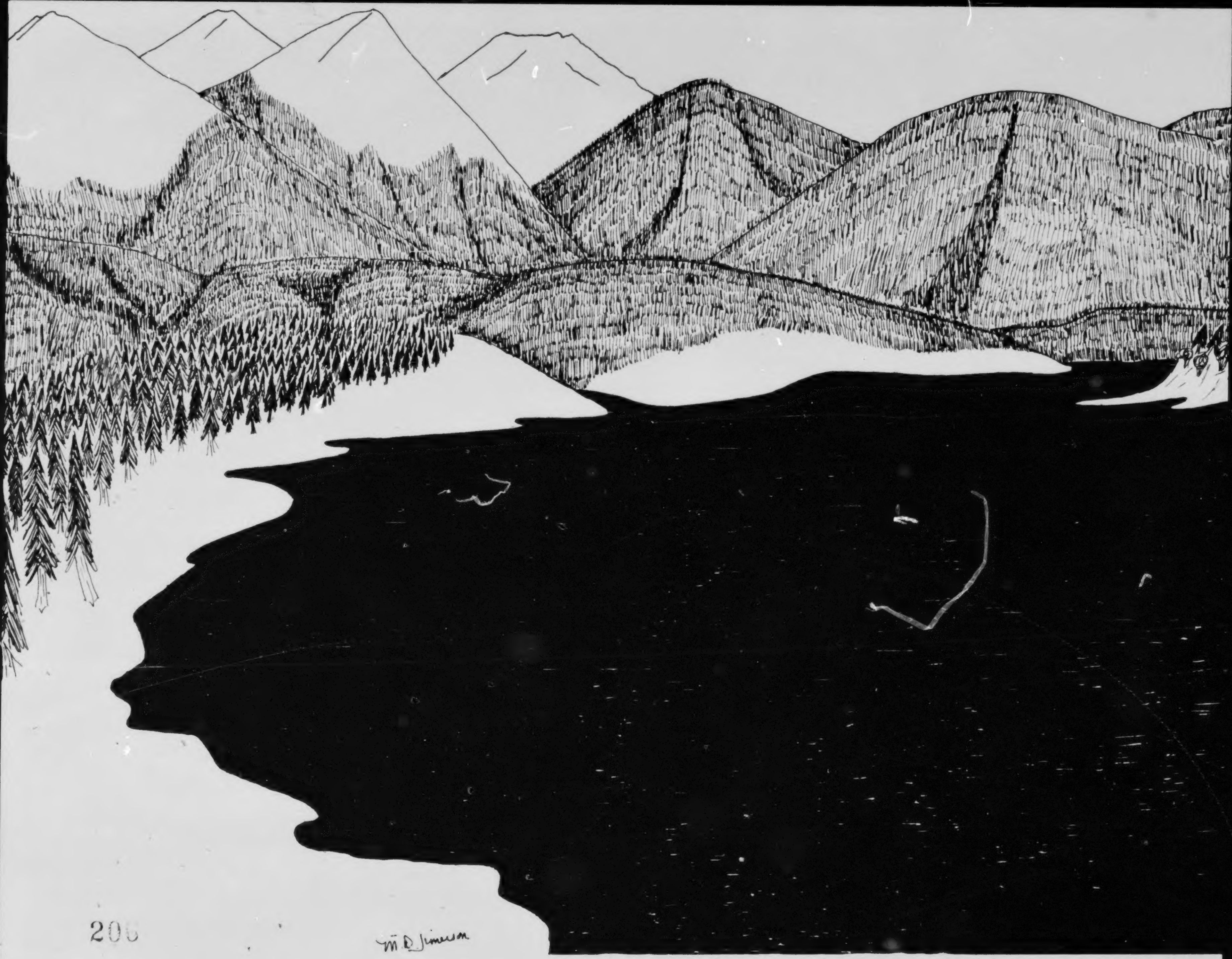
Let's imagine we're looking at the fish campsite - Last Tetlin. From the riverbank we can see a tent frame and a smokehouse for each family. Trails branch out here and there from the campsite. Fireweed is growing all over.

We walk to the back of the village. From there we can see all the lakes - there are lots of them - which empty out into the Last Tetlin River.

We take a boat downriver toward the fish traps. In the clear spots we can look down to the bottom of the river and see whitefish and northern pike swimming around.

The river curves, back and forth, so we can't see very far down it from any one place. Along the banks there are spruce trees and willows, and once in awhile we have to steer the boat out of the way of a fallen tree that hangs over the river. As we go down toward the mouth of the river, we can see that the trees are getting taller and more dense.



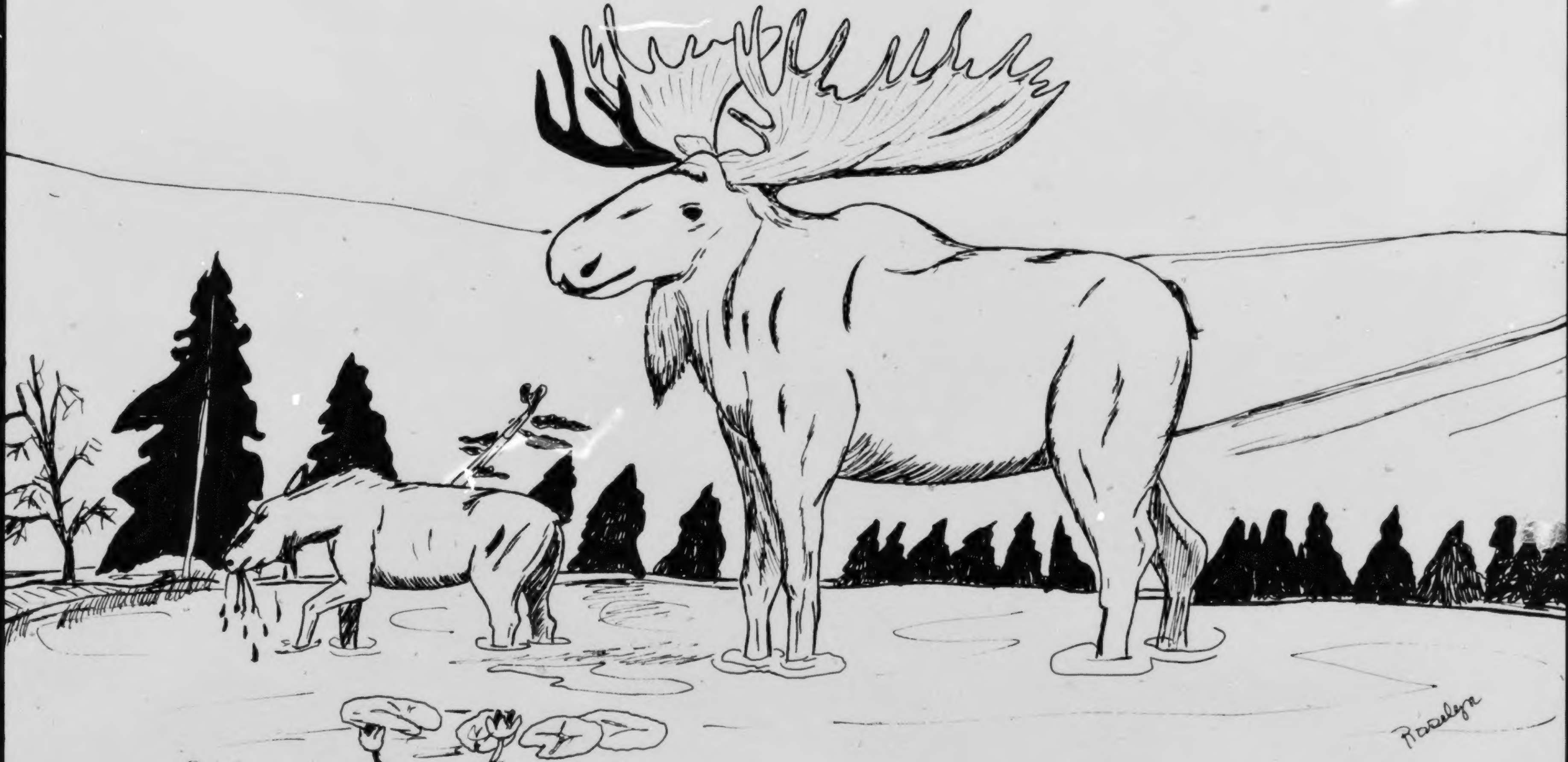

M D Jimerson

Last Tetlin River empties into Tetlin Lake - the largest lake in the area. When we enter the lake from the river, we see the mountains at the far side. They seem to flow into the lake.

We'll go around the lake clockwise. The first creek we come to is Bear Creek. It's very clear and ice cold, and there are lots of fish in it in the summer and fall.

7

We go on past the creek, along the lakeshore, until we come to an island. The lake between the island and the shore is very shallow and is a favorite place for moose. They feed on the water lily roots. All along the west side of the lake, there are marshy areas like this where moose feed and ducks of all types can be found.


Roselyn

We'll go on to the north side of the lake. The land becomes more hilly and the shores are rocky. This is one place where my family fishes.

We'll keep going around the lakeshore. From the northeast side of the lake we can see a hill we call "Rock Hill". We pick raspberries on Rock Hill.

We go past Rock Hill, and the banks become high and steep. We can't see much over the bank from our boat until we come to the mouth of Tetlin River. Then we can see the area between the mouth of Tetlin River and the mouth of Last Tetlin River; it's flat and willowy.

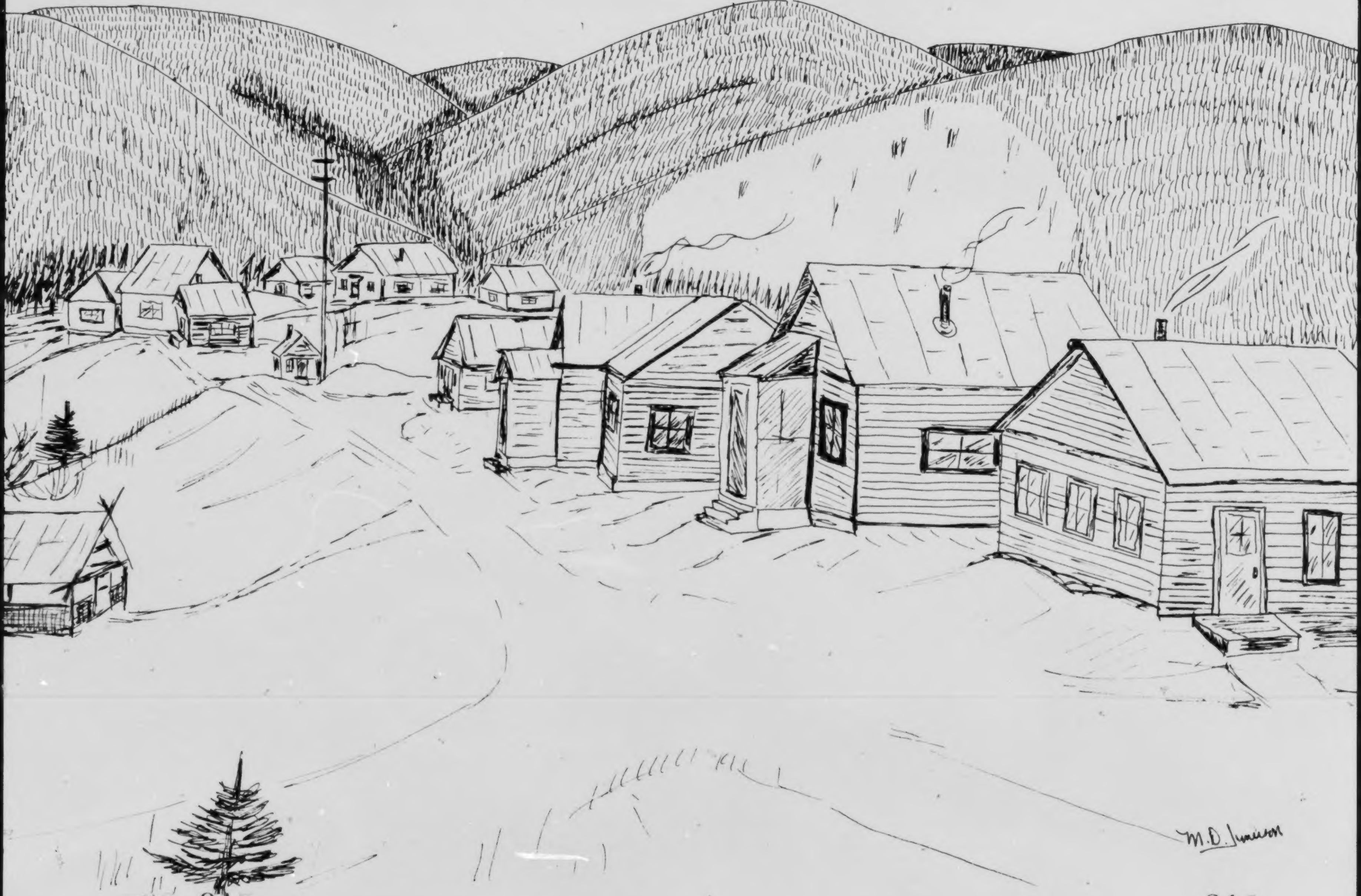
Going up the Tetlin River, we can see only the high banks for quite awhile. Once in awhile we can see bears up on the banks - brown or black bears. Common snipes skitter along the riverbanks. Blackbirds chatter. Woodpeckers hammer away somewhere in the forest. We hear canaries, chickadees, and crows, all singing or talking. How beautiful it all sounds!

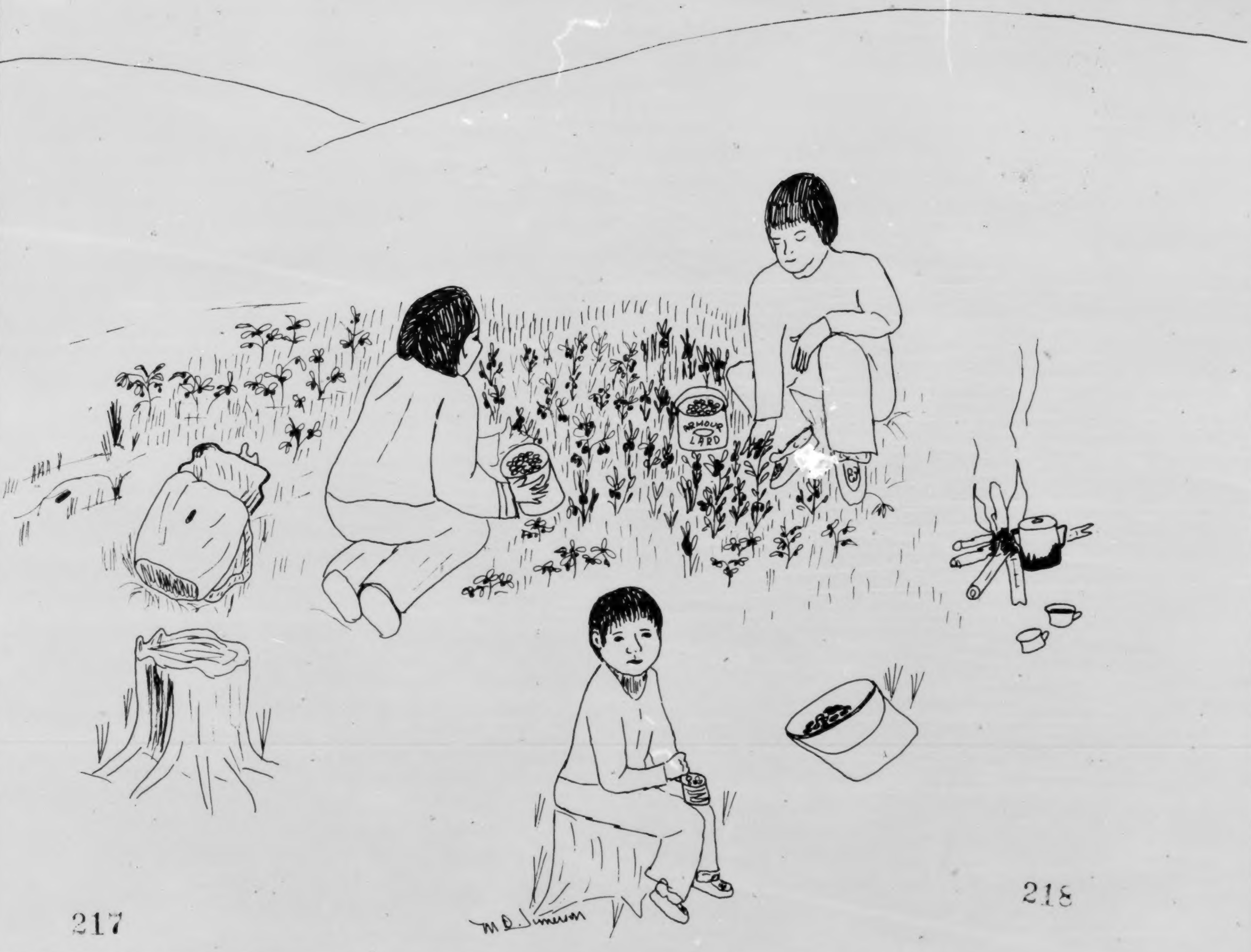
Every now and then a creek empties water out of some small lake into the Tetlin River. There are lots of willows - river willows - hanging over the river.

Finally we see Tetlin Village. It sits on the left bank of the river, and we can see it clearly from the place where we beach the boat. People come down to meet us - it doesn't matter if we're strangers! They'll come down to meet us anyway!

Before we go inside we take a look around. The land rises from the village toward the north. One of the hills, called Tetlin Hill, is a good place to find blueberries and cranberries. And to the south of the village, the land becomes marshy. That's where the muskrat and beaver can be found.

From Tetlin Village we can follow a trail anywhere we want to go - all over our land. But that's a different journey!


M.D. Jamieson


ARMOUR
LARD
M.E. Simeon

Chapter II

Getting Ready for Winter

Fall was the time to get ready for the winter - the start of another yearly cycle. There was lots to do.

When I was little, the women and children (and one man, to protect us from bears) used to leave the village and go up into the hills to pick berries. We picked cranberries, bearberries, and rose hips. We'd be gone all day, and come back to the village at night.

We dug roots, too - a kind called Indian potatoes. They are very good when they're fried in moose grease.

Fall was also the time to do some last minute fishing. We fished for whitefish and northern pike in the Tetlin River close to the village, and we went up the Kalukna River for grayling.

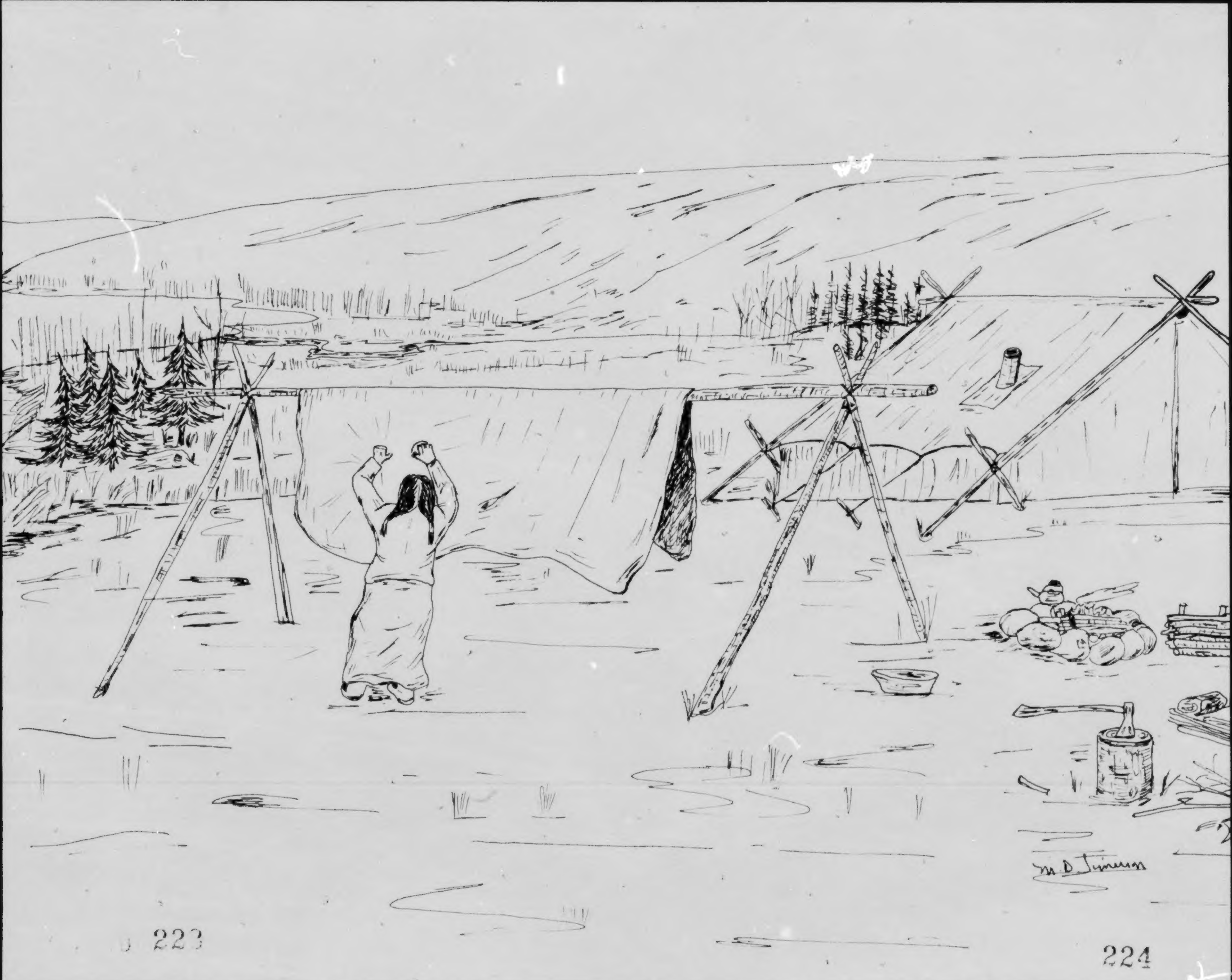
The men - my dad, brother, uncles, and some other relatives - went hunting at Tetlin Lake. They stayed there until they shot a moose. Then they cut it up and brought the meat and hide back to the village.

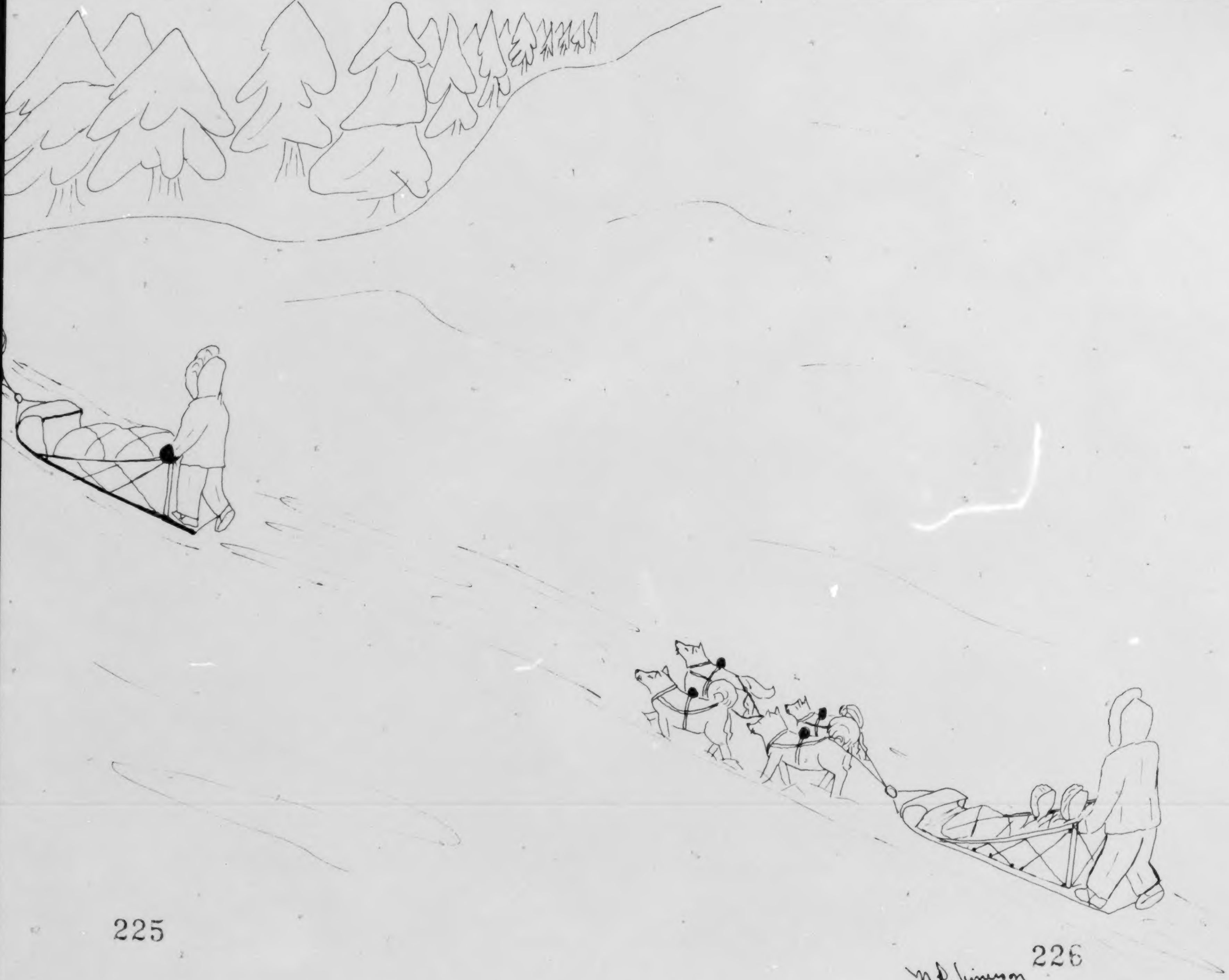
Sometimes, if someone had a car or truck, the men drove up the Taylor Highway to Mt. Fairplay to hunt caribou. In the old days, my dad told me, they hunted caribou down by Last Tetlin. There used to be a caribou fence there. But when I was little, the men had to go all the way to Mt. Fairplay.

The meat, both moose meat and caribou meat, was brought back to the village. There the women dried it and smoked it. The children had to keep a smoky fire going in the smokehouse all the time. Besides smoking the meat, the fire kept the flies out, too.

The women also tanned the hides. My mom used tanned hides to make mittens, mukluks, and moccasins. She did beautiful beadwork on the hides.

If we didn't do all these things - berry picking, fishing, and hunting - our caches would be empty before the winter was over. My mom and dad used to tell us that in the old days, an empty cache meant sure death. So fall was a very important time of the year for us.


M. D. Simeon



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M.P. Simeon 226

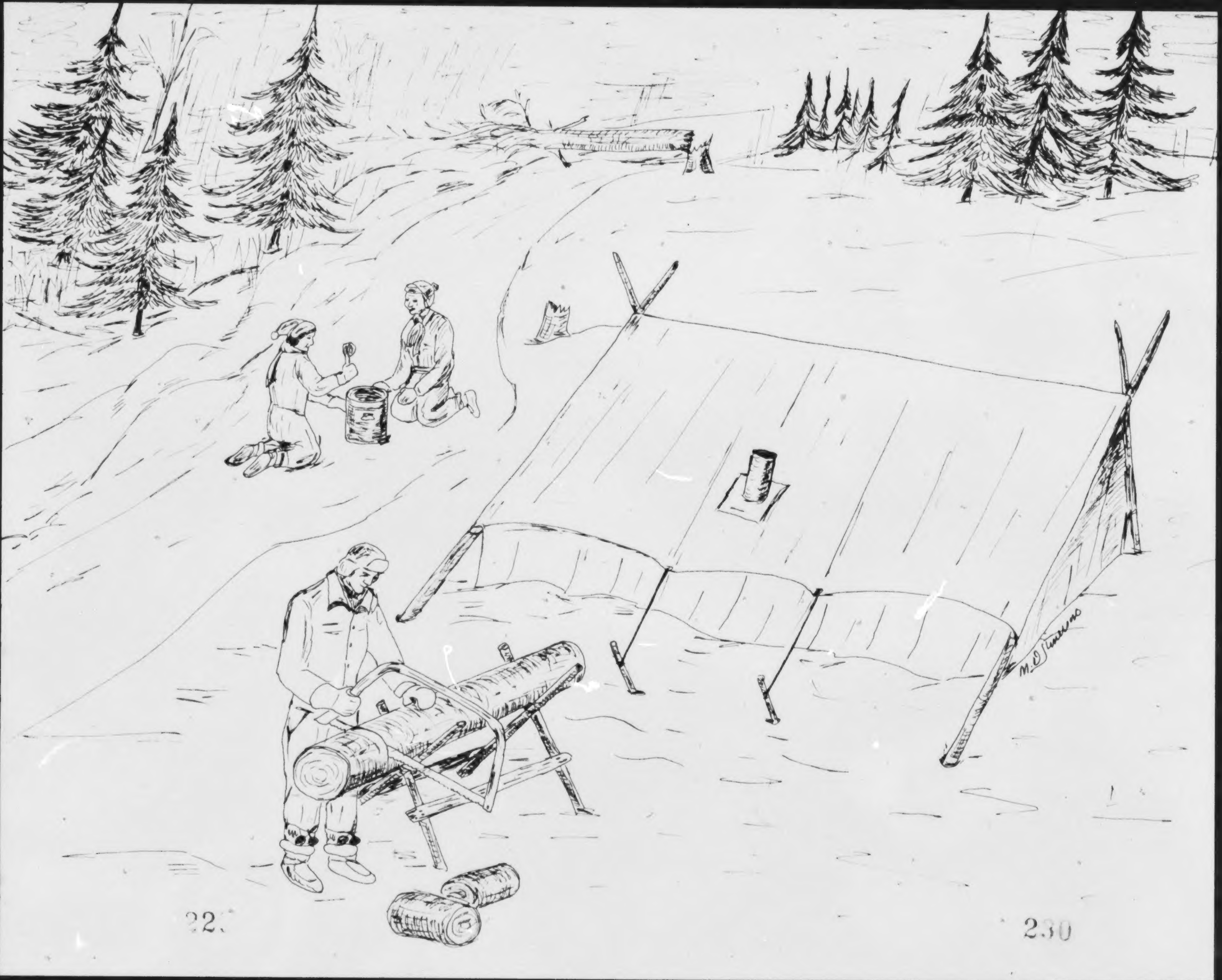
Chapter III

Wintertime: Beaver Camp

In early February my family used to move to a beaver camp called Sea Lake. We went by dog sled. My dad drove the first sled packed with all our gear. He went ahead to break trail. Then my mom followed, driving the second sled. This sled was packed with us children.

At that time there were three of us: I sat in the back, my brother Charles sat between my knees, and our baby sister Betty sat in front of him. We were all wrapped up in sleeping bags and canvas, and tied in with strong rope. We couldn't move at all, we were tied so tightly. What a relief it was when Mom and Dad finally decided it was time for tea break! It never came soon enough for us.

When we got close to camp, my dad started setting some of our beaver snares. Then when we got to the campsite, we pitched the tent and started fixing it up. Dad put the stove in place while Mom, my brother, and I gathered spruce boughs and spread them on the tent floor. Dad got the fire going in the stove, Mom cooked supper, and then we all went to bed early. Tomorrow would be a busy day - we'd be setting the rest of the snares.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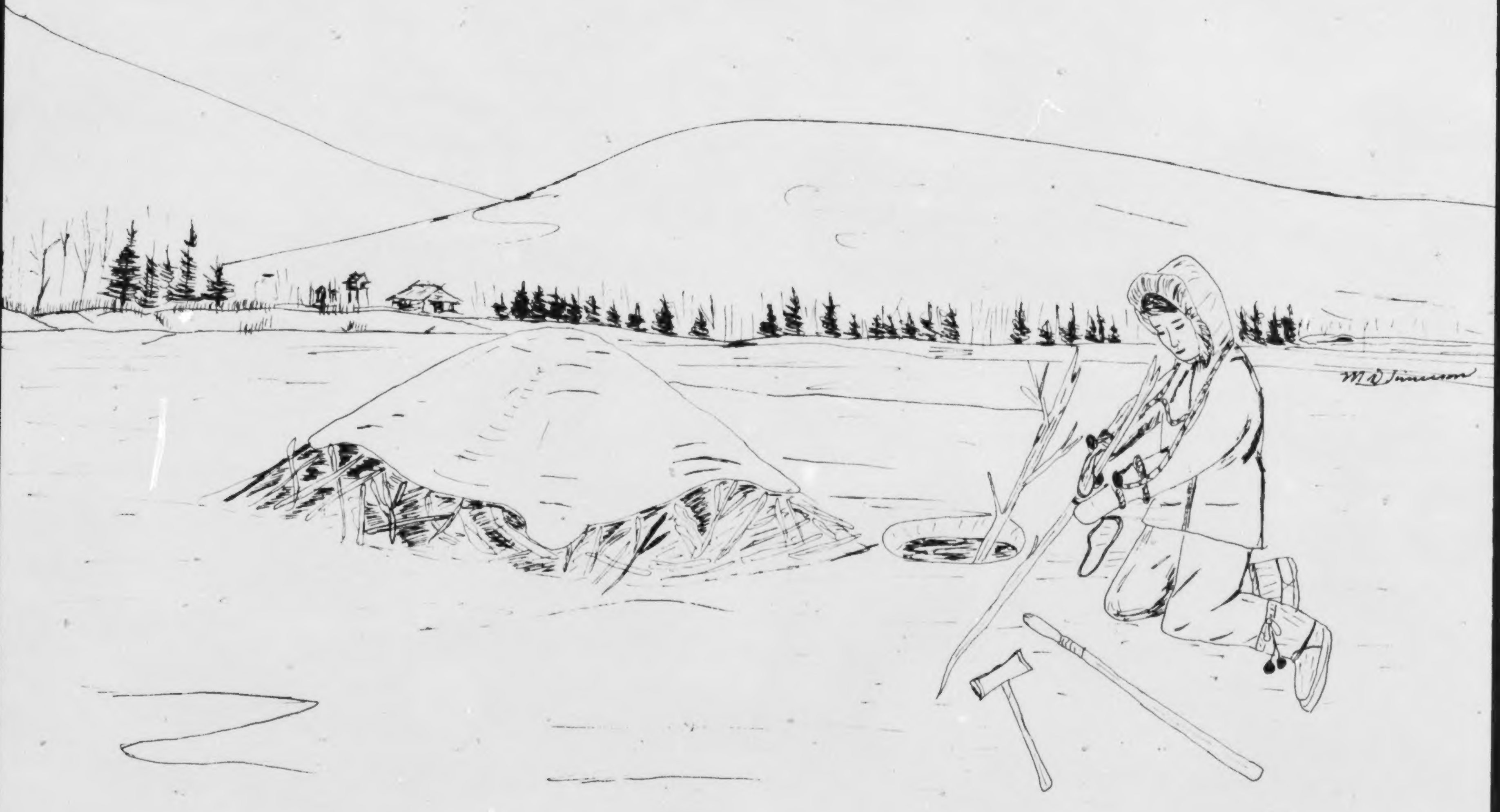
Next day we got up early and ate a quick breakfast. While Mom was packing lunch for all of us, Dad was hitching the dogs to the sled. Then the whole family was off to set snares.

Dad knew where he had set snares the year before, and he went to those places to check out the old beaver houses. Sometimes beavers had abandoned their old houses and moved to new ones. But sometimes the old houses were being used again this year.

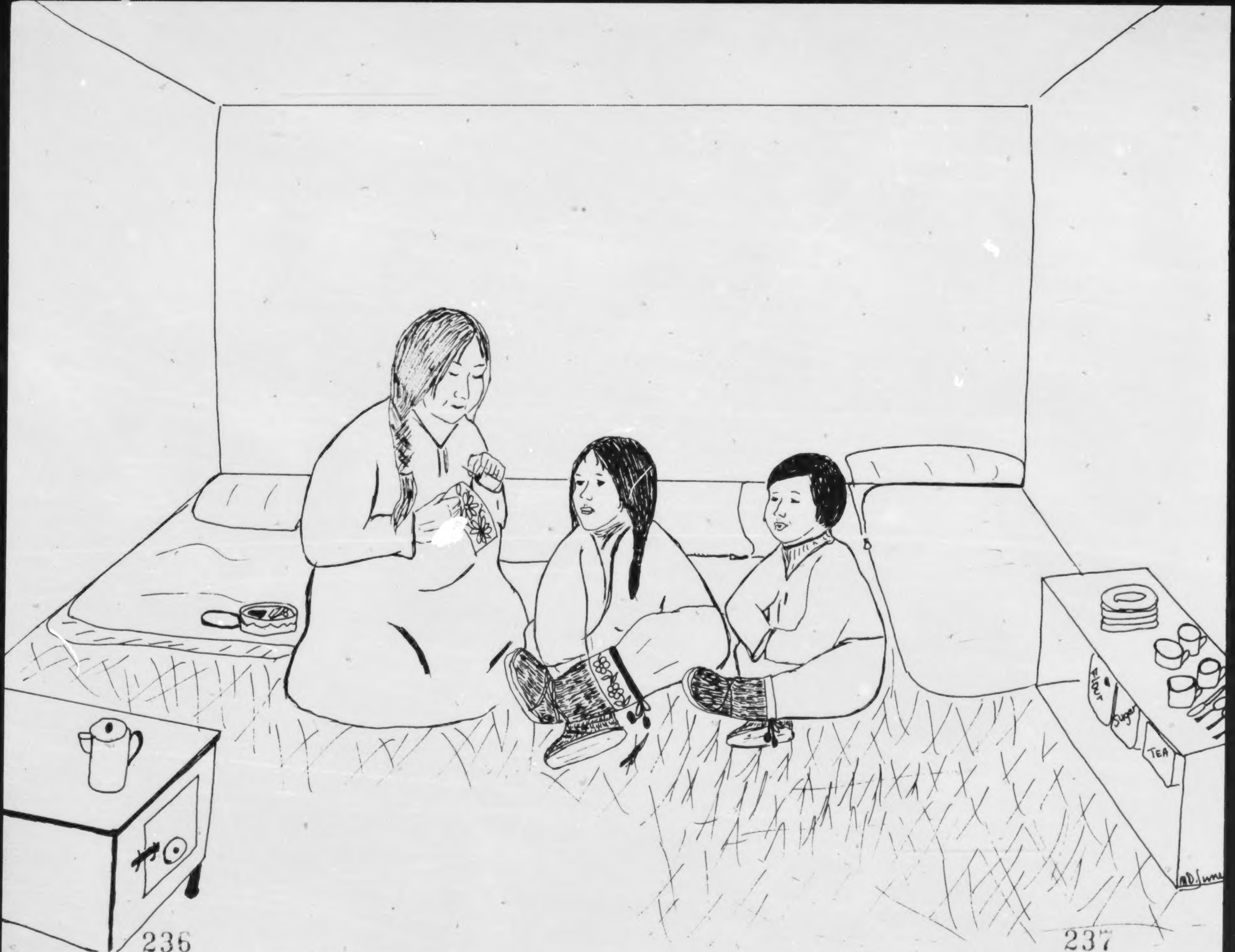
When we found a live house, Dad would chisel an opening in the ice nearby. He cut a pole of fresh birch to use as bait, and stuck it down into the opening he had made. By now the beavers were tired of their stored birch, so they welcomed the fresh pole my dad put down as bait. Then we looked for another pole - a dry one this time - and put one or two snares on the end of it. We didn't have to worry about the beavers eating the dry pole. Dad lowered it down the hole next to the bait pole, kicked some snow over the opening, and continued on to the next beaver house.



233 234

We checked the beaver snares every day. On a good day we'd come home with a load of beavers. Usually, after the first day, just Dad and I or Dad and my brother would go along the trapline, and the other three members of the family would wait back at camp.

At night, Mom and Dad used to tell stories about the days when they were growing up. Mom told us stories about how she and her brother came to Tetlin to live with the chief after their parents had died. Mom was only about 10 years old. She came from Chena, and she had to learn a new language when she got to Tetlin. She was often scared and lonely when she first moved to our area.



Flour
Sugar
TEA
M.D. June

Mom and Dad also remembered when white teachers and ministers came to the Tetlin area, and how terrifying it was for them. The people had to give up their old nomadic way of life and settle down in one place. In order for their children to go to school, they had to live near the school, and the children had to learn English. People tried to make a living the new way - men hunted for jobs, but jobs were scarce. This was a scarey time for the people of Tetlin.

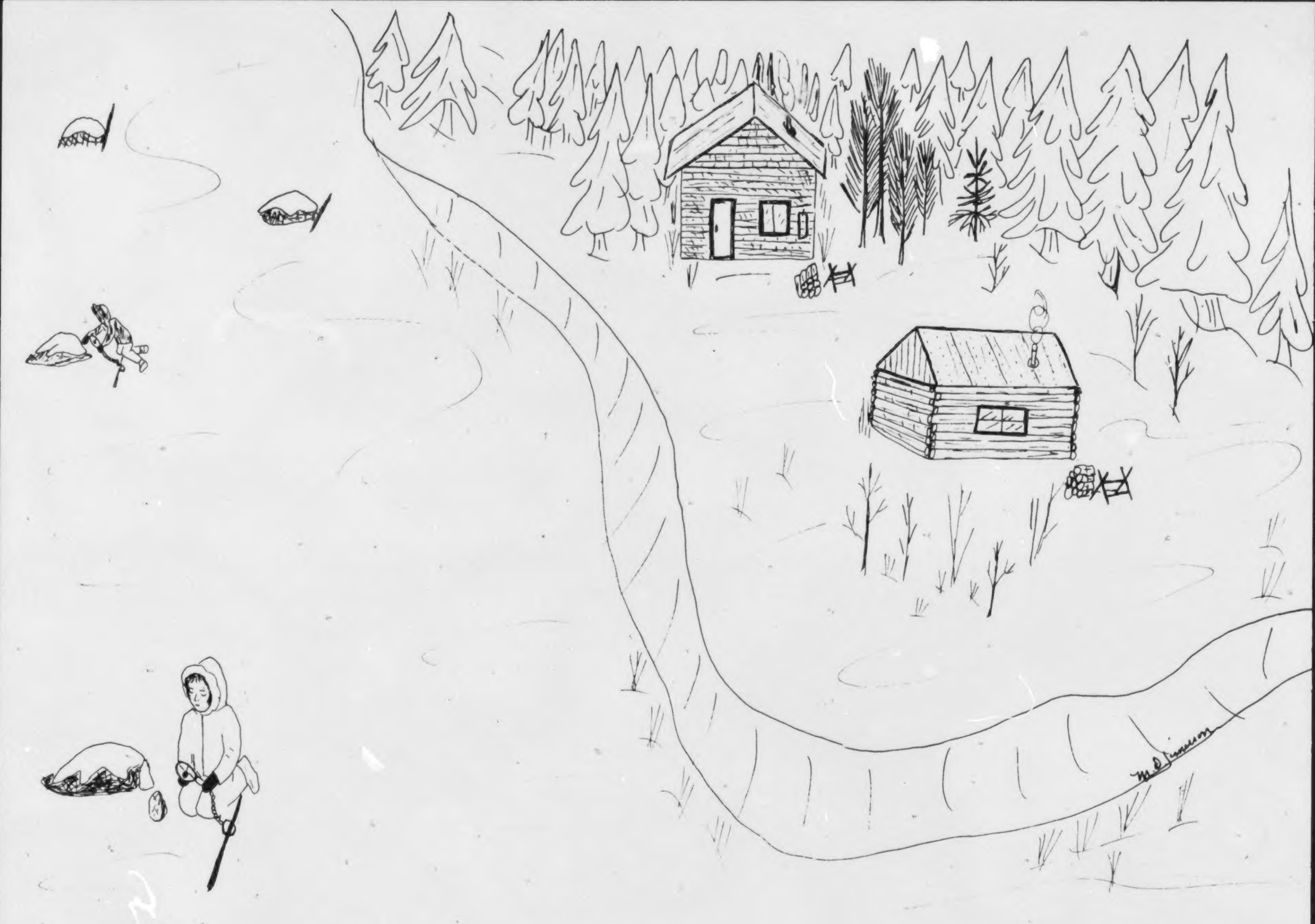
When I think of the stories my parents told us at beaver camp, I can still smell the fresh spruce boughs on the tent floor, biscuits, tea, and the firewood in our tent. And I remember lying in bed listening to the owls talk at night after everyone else was asleep.

Chapter IV

Spring and Muskrat Trapping

Sometime before break-up my family used to move by dogteam to Dog Lake between Tetlin and Northway for muskrat trapping. We had a cabin there, so we didn't have to pack many things - mostly some food and blankets. We joined another family, the Tituses, who also had a cabin at Dog Lake.

Mom and Dad went out to set the muskrat traps while we children stayed around camp. The older children had to look after the younger ones.



Sometimes we older children would go out on the lake, find our own muskrat houses, and set traps in them. It's easy to set traps. Just cut the top off the house and put a trap inside in the ice entryway. Then put the cover back on the house, and move on to the next muskrat house. We went back every day to check the traps. We children used to get from 50 to 100 muskrats during one spring at muskrat camp.

Each of us skinned his own muskrats. We learned how to stretch them and dry them, so we could sell them to the General Store.

Around break-up time, when the snow became slushy, we packed up our sleds and headed back to the village.

Even when we got back to Tetlin, we weren't yet through with muskrats. We used to walk out to some of the lakes. We'd take a dog with us who could retrieve and pack. Since the lakes were open by now, we shot the muskrats with .22 rifles, and sent the dogs out into the water to retrieve them. Once again, we had to skin and dry our own muskrats. But we could keep the money we got for the skins ourselves!

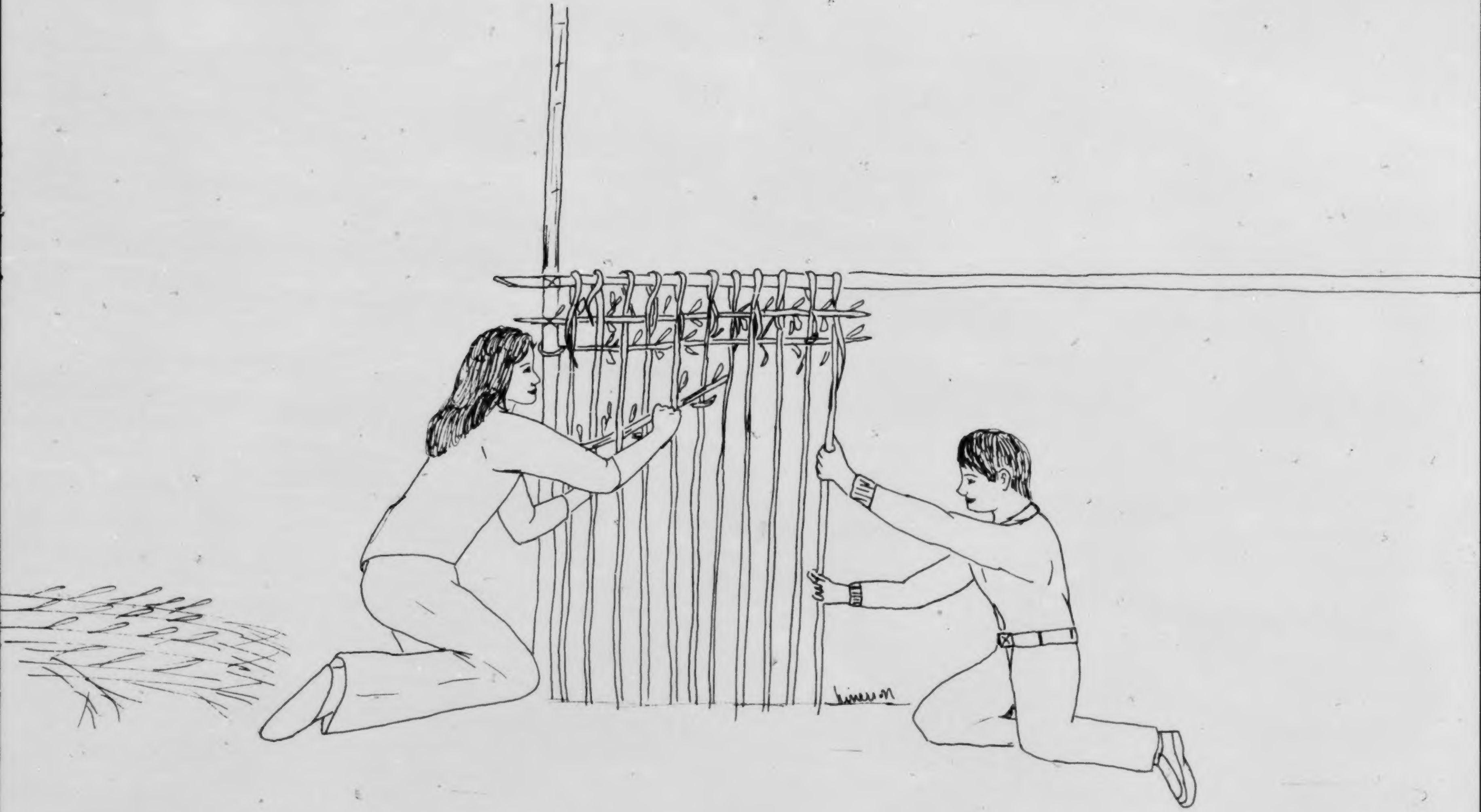
CHAPTER V

Fish Camp at Last Tetlin

In late May, my family moved again. This time we went to Last Tetlin by boat. By the time we got there, the whitefish were running.

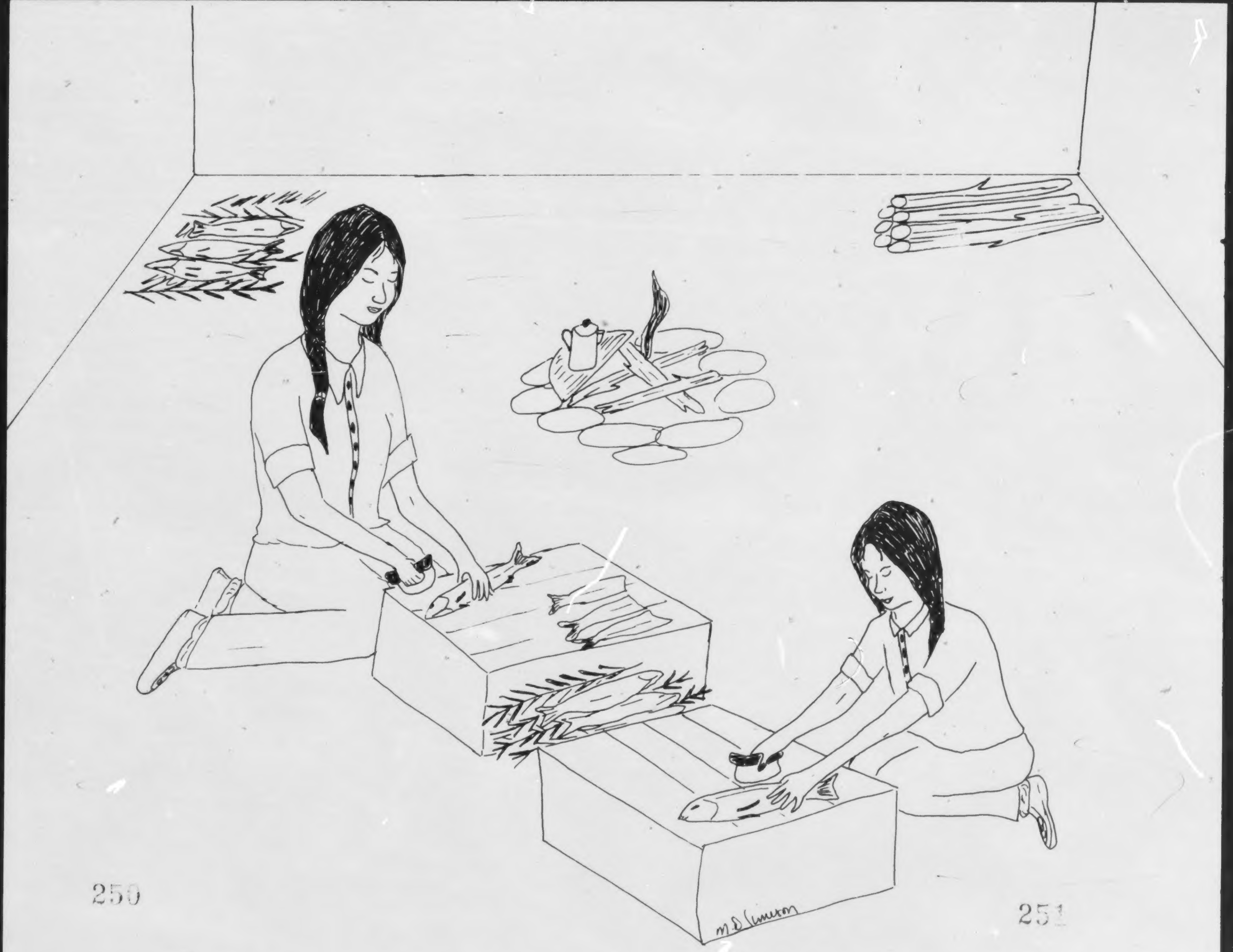
Almost the whole village moved to Last Tetlin in the summer. Each family had its own campsite with a smokehouse. The first thing everyone did was to fix up the tent and smokehouse.

In our family, Mom and Dad put the tent up. Meanwhile, it was up to the older children to repair the smokehouse. We gathered long, thin willow sticks, and wove them together into the wall of last year's smokehouse. We made the walls pretty solid solid enough to keep out dogs. We used the smokehouse both as a place to eat and as a place to smoke fish during the summer.



By the time we children had finished the smokehouse, Mom and Dad had pitched the tent. We spread spruce boughs on the tent floor, and moved everything inside. Then we were ready for summer. The next day we would start cutting fish.

Dad usually left camp to go firefighting with other men from the village once we were settled in at Last Tetlin. So, Mom took our family's turn at tending the camp fish trap and caught all the fish we were going to need for the winter.

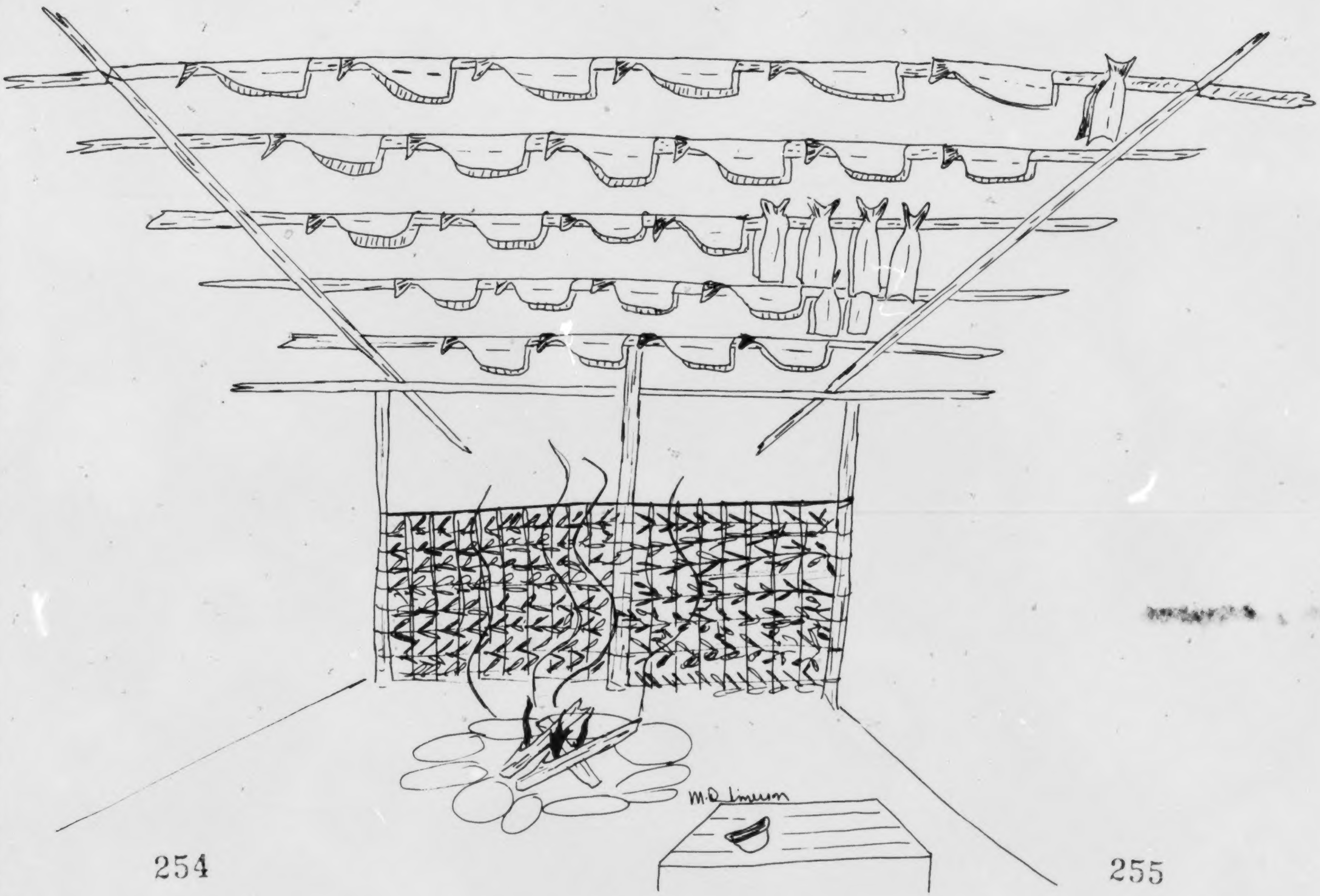

M.D Simeon

There are two ways to cut up whitefish: ba' is for eating and ts'ilakee is dog food. Mom prepared the ba', but she let us children cut up fish for ts'ilakee.

We took the fish up to our family's campsite to clean and smoke. Each fish cutter had his own fish cutting board made of a split log. Mom and we children sat next to our cutting boards and worked until all the fish had been cut. Then we could go visiting around camp. We were always offered tea and fried fish or fish stew.

After a fish was properly cleaned and prepared, it was hung up to dry on a pole in the smokehouse. My mother and grandmother kept a smoky fire going all the time. Besides smoking the fish, they had to keep the flies out. A good, big rotten log will burn all night with no tending.

Sometimes we dried the eggs along with the fish, and sometimes we just fried the eggs and guts and ate them right away. Dried fish eggs are better!


M.D. Lineuon

Once in awhile, when fish weren't running, the women and children went berry picking. While Mom and Gramma picked, we children sometimes trimmed the bark off a birch tree and scraped up the sap with a knife. Delicious!

We stayed at fish camp until late July. Then we packed everything up, went back to the village, and started the yearly cycle over again, to prepare for the coming winter.

KOYUKON
RIDDLES

adapted by
Richard Dauenhauer

June 1975

Book 7
of the
Athabascan Indians of Interior Alaska
Social Studies Unit

A Production of the
Alaska Bilingual Education Center
Alaska Native Education Board
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Anchorage, Alaska

6-75-500

In the winter, after the hard work of summer and fall was done, after the winter food supply had been gathered and prepared, the Athabascans had leisure time for entertainment. Many of the Athabascans used to pose riddles, and riddling is still very popular among some groups.

Among the Koyukon, riddles were asked in the second half of winter, beginning in December when the sun begins to come back and the days grow longer and brighter. The riddles were associated with the return of light.

Riddles are like poems. A riddle is an act of imagination -- an act of seeing something in terms of something else.

The world of the riddle seems different from the everyday world because riddles turn things upside down and inside out. When the riddle answers put things back together again, we see that the riddle world is the same as the everyday world, but gives us a new or different way of seeing the everyday world.

The two dozen riddles in this book have been adapted from the collection of Koyukon riddles published in 1913 by Fr. Julius Jette, S.J. They will lead you to the world of the riddle-imagination, the world of Athabascan poetry. Why not enter it by making up some riddles of your own?

1. I drag my shovel on the trail.

Answer ⟶

1a. A beaver.

3. Far away, a
fire flaring up.

3a. Red fox tail.

2. At the tip it's
dipping in the ashes.

2a. Ermine tail.

4. Small dots
far away.

4a. When the birds return.

5. It really snowed hard in opposite directions on my head.

5a. A mountain sheep.

6. We come upstream in a red canoe.

6a. Red salmon.

7. It sounds like when we shake a quiver.

7a. Hanging birchbark, flapping in the wind.

8. Like a broom, I'm sweeping with my body.

8a. The tops of grass in winter.

9. Cache-like,
leaning to the side.

9a. A salmon berry.

10. It is like a herd
trailing up the hill.

10a. The graveyard,
tombstones carved
with totems.

11. I make chips.

11a. An ax.

12. I brace it
with my back.

12a. A ridge-pole.

13. I stick my head
in the fire.

13a. A log,
burning on the end.

14. I reach
beyond the mountains.

14a. The sun
or moon.

15. I dive
into the heat.

15a. A fire poker.

16. With a noise
we drag along the trail.

16a. Sled runners.

17. Grease-like, like
sun on water, streaking
in opposite directions.

17a. Sled runner tracks.

18. We are wearing
a sheep skin hat.

18a. A stump on which
the snow has fallen.

19.

When we put small sticks
into a house.

19a. Eating.

20. When we dump
little hills in there
really fast.

20a. Eating.

21. The water
tears away at me.

21a. An island.

22. We go singing
in the water.

22a. Paddle whirls.

23.

I broke my bow, shooting
at a caribou.

23a. The northern lights.

24. It is like a herd
bedded down on snow.

24a. Bare ground
when the snow is melting.

ARTIFACT INFORMATION BOOK

A Guide to the
Athabascan Artifact Cards

Written by

Patricia H. Partnow

Illustrated by

Jeanette Bailey

A Production of

Alaska Bilingual Education Center

of the
Alaska Native Education Board
4510 International Airport Road
Anchorage, Alaska

5-75-100

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UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA MUSEUM
Fairbanks, Alaska,

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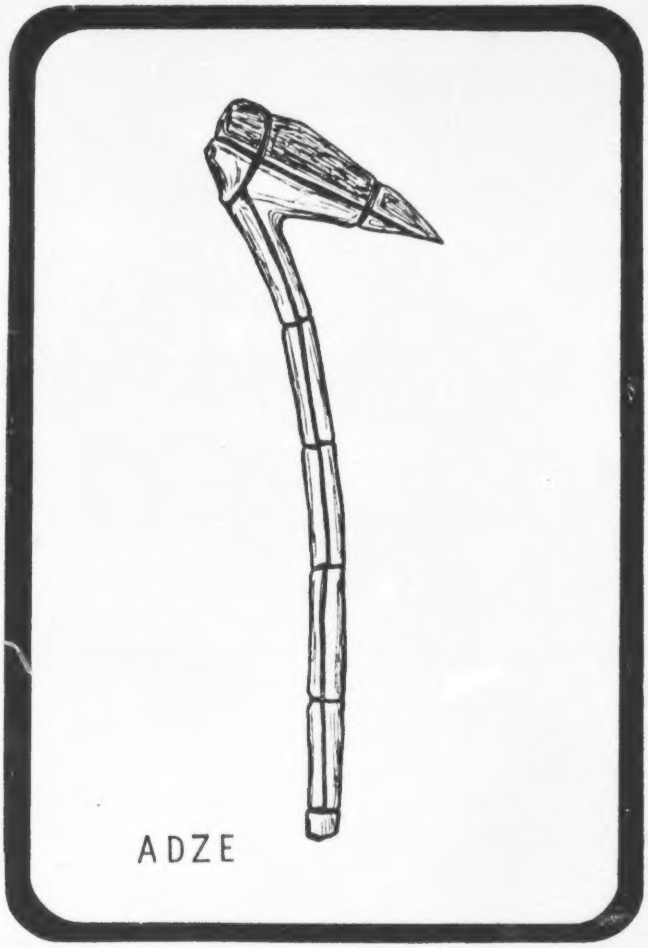


ADZE

Where was it used?

Throughout Alaska.

What was it made of?

The blade was made of a hard, smooth stone, ground to a sharp edge. The handle was either wood or antler, and the blade was lashed to the handle with rawhide.

Who made it?

Men.

How was it used?

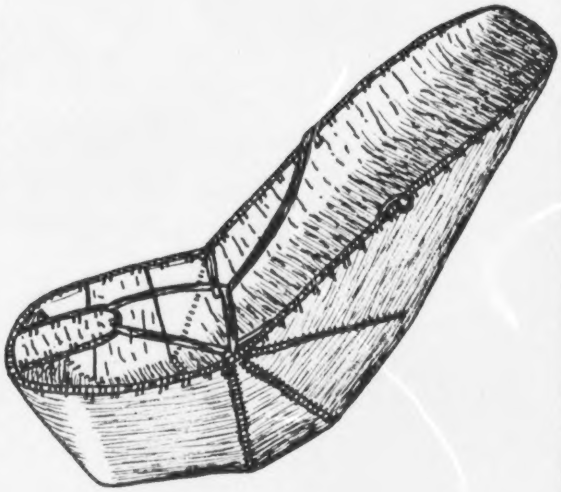
Adzes were used to cut down trees for firewood as well as for house and tent poles. In the days before steel came to Alaska, the people first chopped a bit out of the base of a tree with the adze, then felled it by burning away the trunk with a smoldering stick. Smaller adzes were used to make bowls and wooden tools.

Who used it?

Men and boys were usually in charge of felling and chopping trees, as well as making wooden tools.

When was it used?

Whenever wood had to be cut -- all year round.



BABY CARRIER

Where was it used?

Throughout Alaska, although the Ingalik did not carry babies in these cradles. Instead, they simply laid the babies in them when they were inside.

What was it made of?

The carrier was made of birch bark and lashed with spruce root. Animal teeth or shells were attached for decoration and good luck.

Who made it?

Women.

How was it used?

In all areas except the Ingalik, babies were carried in these baskets on their mothers' backs. A strap held the basket to the mother.

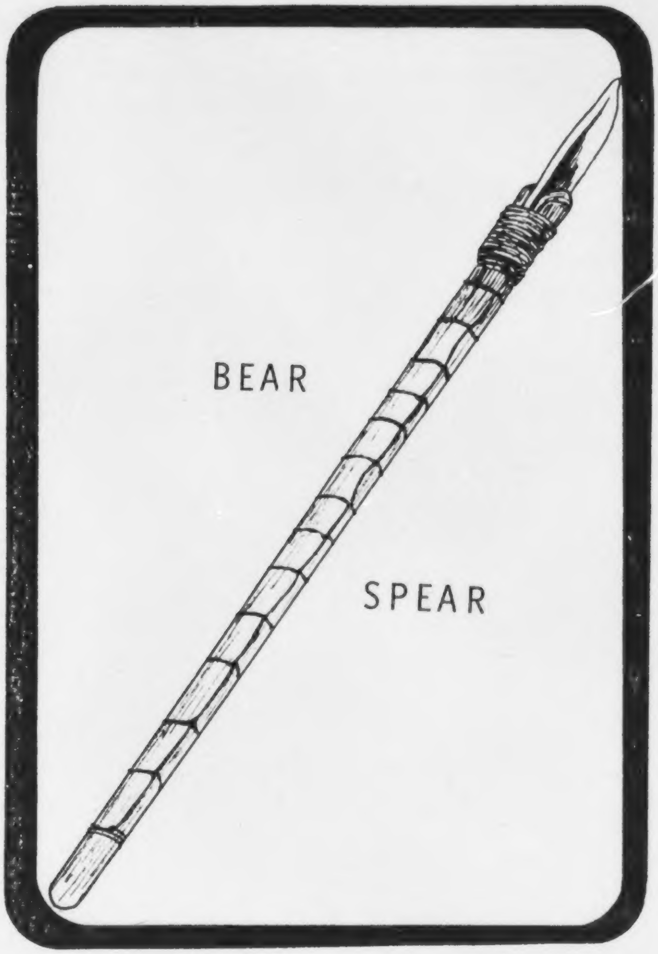
The baskets were filled with soft, dry moss, and the baby sat on the moss. Whenever the moss needed to be changed, the mother threw away the old moss and put in a new handful.

Who used it?

Mothers and babies. Each basket belonged to a certain child, and was not passed on to younger brothers and sisters as the child grew up.

When was it used?

Until the baby could walk.



Where was it used?

Throughout Alaska.

What was it made of?

The handle was wooden, the point was moose bone or stone, and the lashing was rawhide.

Who made it?

Men.

How was it used?

Bears were usually taken in deadfalls, but if a man wanted to show his bravery he would hunt with a spear. He would get the bear's attention, and when the bear reared up on its hind legs, the hunter would stab it in the neck. He'd then quickly move out of the way of the bear's paws and continue to stab until the bear was dead.

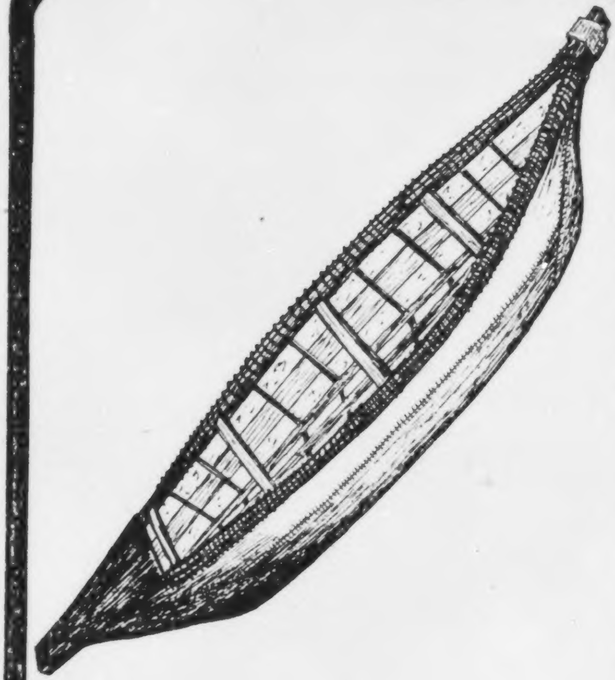
Different Athabascan groups followed different customs after the bear had been killed. The Koyukon, for instance, cut off its paws and burst its eyes in order to satisfy the bear's spirit so that it would not hurt the hunter.

Who used it?

Men.

When was it used?

Usually in the winter.



BIRCH BARK CANOE

Where was it used?

Throughout Alaska, except in the Lower Cook Inlet area where skin boats were used. Gwich'in Athabascans did not use the birch bark canoe until recently.

What was it made of?

The frame was spruce wood, the covering was birch bark, and the lashing was spruce root. Spruce gum glue was applied to all the seams.

Who made it?

Men and women worked together to make a canoe. The women were most helpful in sewing and gumming the canoe.

How was it used?

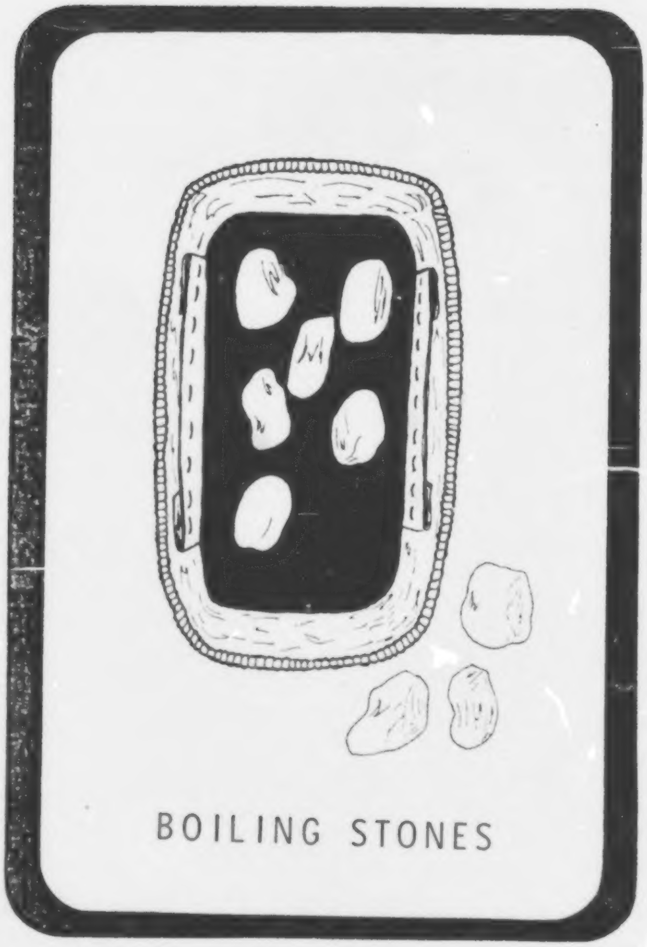
Canoes were used during the summer for most travel. Each man owned his own small hunting canoe. There were also larger traveling canoes which were used to move belongings to a new camp.

Who used it?

Men used the hunting canoe, and everyone used the traveling canoe.

When was it used?

Summertime.



BOILING STONES

Where were they used?

Throughout Alaska.

What were they made of?

The preferred type of rock for a boiling stone was quartzite. It was said that other kinds of stones gave the food a funny taste.

How were they used?

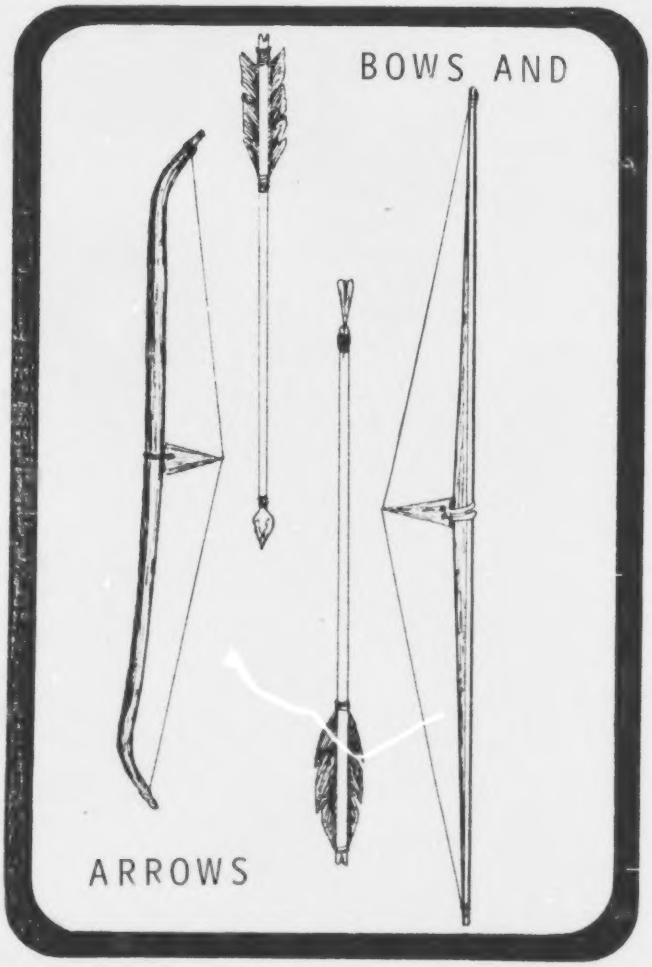
Water was put in a big pit or in a birch bark basket. Then the food that was going to be cooked was put in the container. Meanwhile, boiling stones were being heated in the fire, and when they became red hot, they were lifted up with tongs and dropped into the container. The hot stones heated up the water and cooked the food. When the stones in the container got cold, they were taken out and put back in the fire to heat up again. When they became red hot once again, they were put back into the container. This was repeated until the water boiled and the food was cooked.

Who used them?

Women usually did the cooking, but most men also knew how to cook. Men cooked for themselves when they were away from camp on a hunting trip.

When were they used?

All year long.



Where were they used?

Throughout Alaska.

What were they made of?

The bow was wooden and the bowstring was made of sinew. Arrow shafts were usually spruce wood, with bone or stone points and hawk feathers attached.

Who made them?

Men.

How were they used?

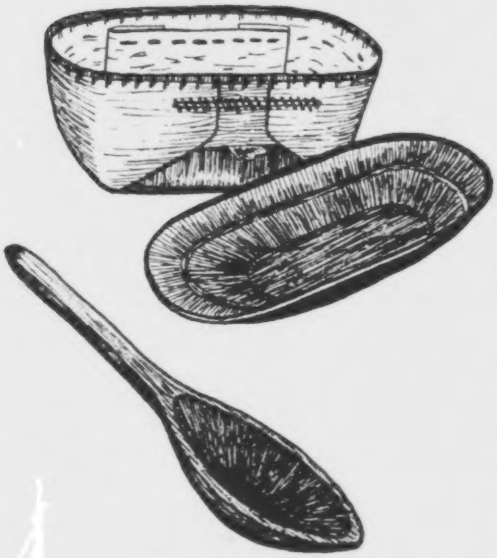
The bow and arrows were the Athabascans' most important weapons. There were many different kinds of arrows, and each had its own special use. For instance, blunt-headed arrows were used to kill small game or birds so the hide and meat would not be torn up. Long bone arrowheads were used to hunt caribou. The arrowheads came out of the shaft and stuck into the animal when it was shot. The bone point caused the caribou to bleed to death.

Who used them?

Men.

When were they used?

Throughout the year.



CONTAINERS

Where were they used?

Throughout Alaska. Wooden containers were used more in Ahtna, Tanaina, and Ingalik areas. Birch bark containers were used in almost all Athabascan areas.

What were they made of?

The wooden containers were made of spruce wood, and spoons were spruce or willow. Bark containers were made of spring-stripped birch bark, lashed with spruce roots.

Who made them?

Men made the wooden containers. Women made birch bark containers.

How were they used?

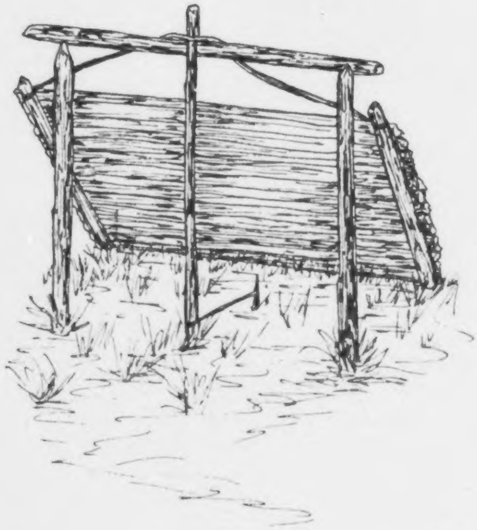
Wooden containers were used as dishes to hold food, especially during potlatches and feasts. Birch bark was shaped into baskets, used as berry buckets, cooking pots, storage baskets, and water carriers. Each woman made her baskets in her own pattern and made different types of baskets for different uses.

Who used them?

Everyone.

When were they used?

All year round.



DEADFALL

Where was it used?

Throughout Alaska.

What was it made of?

Deadfalls were usually heavy logs lashed together with rawhide line. Bait was set somewhere in the trap.

How did it work?

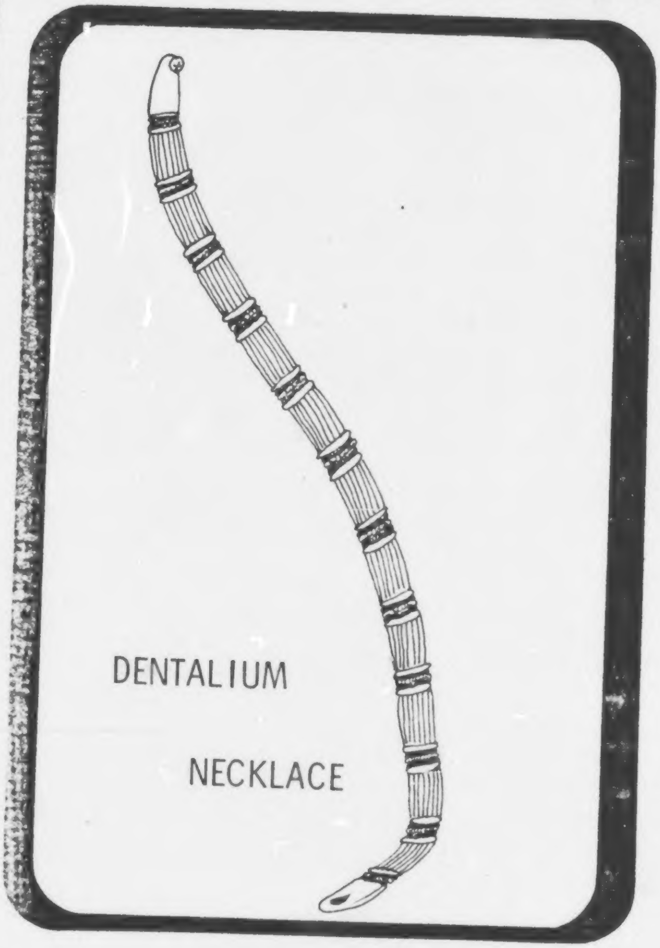
There were different kinds and sizes of deadfalls for different animals, but they were all set up so that a heavy log would fall on the animal when it tried to eat the bait. Deadfalls were used to catch furbearing animals of all sizes, from marten to bears.

Who used it?

Men usually set the big ones, but women sometimes set deadfalls for smaller animals.

When was it used?

Deadfalls for different animals were set at different times of year. Bear deadfalls were usually set in spring. Other furbearing animals were trapped in the winter when their fur was thick.



Where was it used?

In most of the Athabascan areas in Alaska.

What was it made of?

The beads were dentalium, a shell that came from off the coast of British Columbia. The shells were held together by sinew string and rawhide bands.

How was it used?

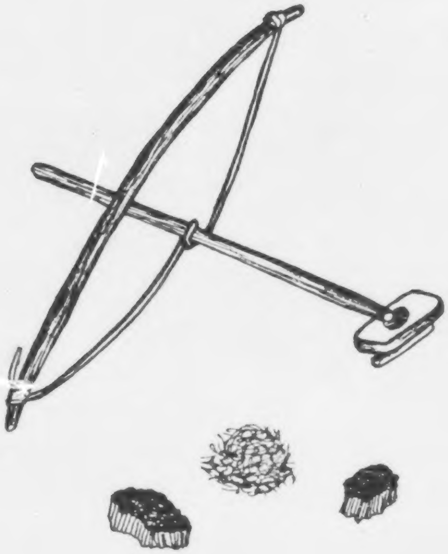
Dentalium necklaces were family treasures. They were worn at potlatches and gathering-up festivals and used to decorate clothing. Athabascan men traded with Indians to the south to get the dentalia. In exchange, they gave hides, copper and greenstone which the southern Indians used for knife blades.

Who used it?

All but the poorest people owned some dentalia, either as nose ornaments, as decorations on clothing, as knife sheath straps, or as necklaces. Rich people owned many objects decorated with dentalia.

When was it used?

All the time, but especially in the winter during potlatches.



FIRE DRILL

Where was it used?

Throughout Alaska. Different types of drills were used in different Athabascan areas. This one was made in Minto, a Lower Tanana settlement.

What was it made of?

The bow and drill were wood. The bow string was rawhide. Birch fungus and birch shavings were used as tinder. The mouthpiece was made either of wood or of the knee bone of a mountain sheep.

Who made it?

Men.

How was it used?

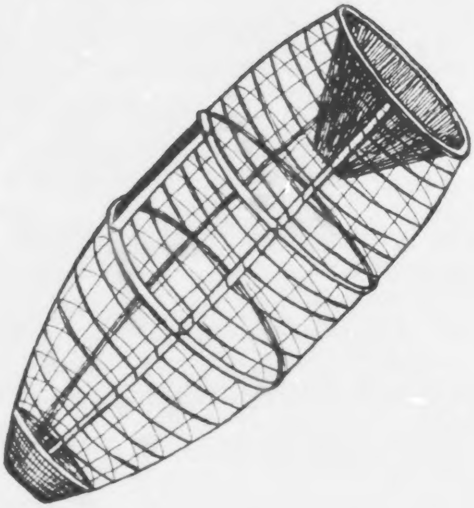
To start a fire, a man held the drill upright with one end sticking into the fungus and the other end held by the mouthpiece. He twirled the drill around using the bow. When it started going fast enough, the fungus heated up and began smoking. Then he blew on it and added the birch shavings to start a flame.

Who used it?

Men usually started fires. Often only one man in a camp would make the fire. Everyone else would light fires from the first one.

When was it used?

Throughout the year.



FISH TRAP

Where was it used?

Throughout Alaska. Fish traps were especially important on the Lower Kuskokwim and Lower Yukon areas where a lot of fishing was done.

What was it made of?

The frame was made of spruce wood and it was bound together with spruce roots.

Who made it?

Men.

How was it used?

The trap was put in a river, facing downstream. Men built a fence or weir on either side of the trap, all the way across the river. Then when the fish swam upstream to spawn, they were forced to swim into the trap. They were not able to swim out of the narrow opening.

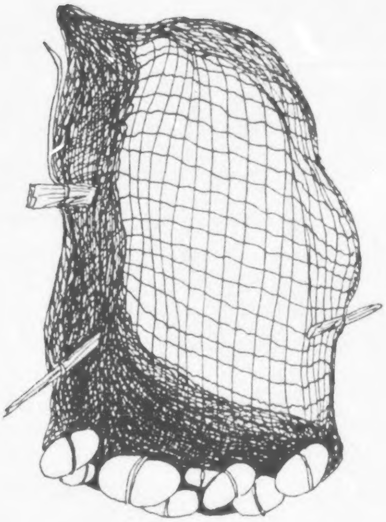
The fishermen made different size traps for the different types of fish.

Who used it?

Men usually tended the big fish traps, and women sometimes tended the smaller ones.

When was it used?

In the spring, summer, and fall the traps were put in rivers. In the winter, small fish traps were sometimes placed under the ice.



GILL NET

Where was it used?

Gill nets were used in Ingalik and Koyukon areas before contact with white men, and in most other areas after contact.

What was it made of?

The net was made of willow roots knotted together, with bark floats and bone or stone sinkers attached.

Who made it?

Women.

How was it used?

The net was stretched across a

stream, anchored to the banks by heavy logs. Floats on the top of the net and sinkers on the bottom kept the gill net in the right position. As fish swam upstream to spawn, they swam into the net and their gills got caught in it. Fishermen checked the net once a day, and removed all the fish they had caught.

Who used it?

Women were often in charge of tending the net in the summer. Men tended it in the winter when it had to be hauled out from under the ice.

When was it used?

People used the gill net in summer and winter, as described above.

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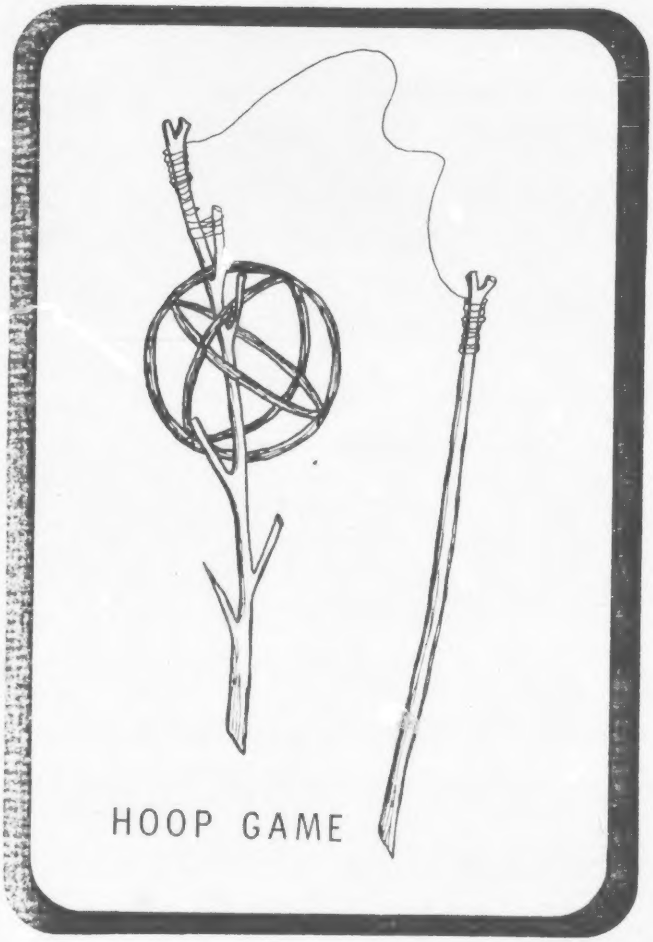


Where was it used?

This game was played in the Gwich'in area. Each group of Athabascans had its own special kinds of games, some like this and others quite different.

What was it made of?

The ball was made of bent willow branches. The hook was a willow branch also, and the line was made of rawhide or spruce root.

How was it used?

One child threw the ball into

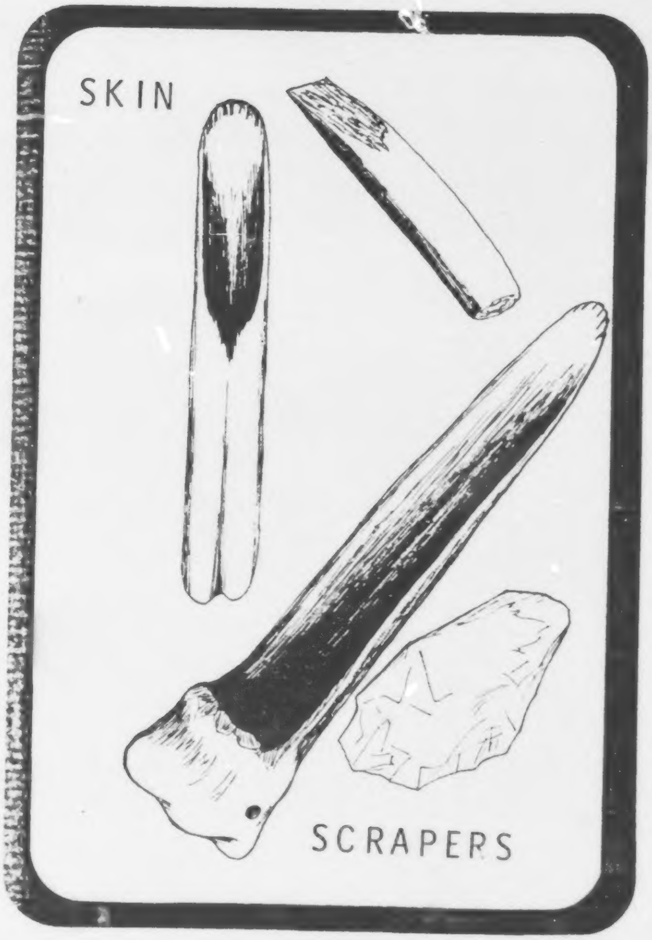
the current of a stream. Then other children, standing on the bank of the stream, threw their hooks at the ball as it was swept downstream. They tried to catch the ball with their hooks. Once a child caught it, he pulled it toward himself with the rawhide line.

Who used it?

Children, usually boys. It was good practice for hunting.

When was it used?

Summertime, when streams were open.



Where were they used?

Throughout Alaska, though different types of scrapers were used in different areas.

What were they made of?

Some were made of moose leg bone. Others were made by attaching a wooden handle to a bone blade. Still others were shaped out of a flat rock.

Who made them?

Men.

How were they used?

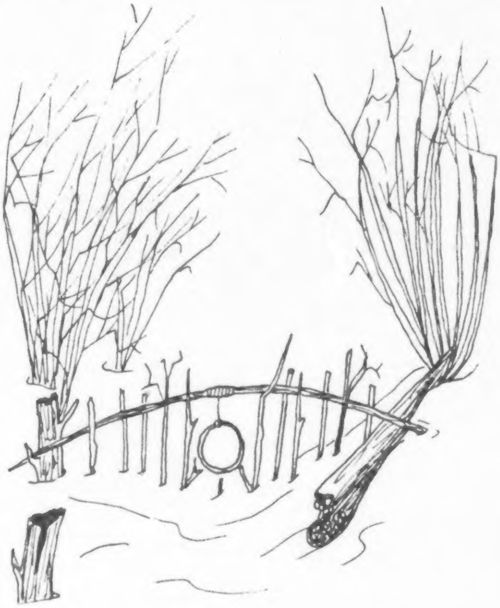
To prepare a hide for clothing, a woman first had to scrape off all the meat and fat from the inside. Then she had to soak the hide so the fur would rot. Then it was scraped off. Each skin had to go through a long process of scraping, soaking, wringing, softening, and smoking before it was ready to be made into clothes.

Who used them?

Women.

When were they used?

The hides were scraped when the animal was first skinned after the kill.



SNARE

Where was it used?

Throughout Alaska.

What was it made of?

Snares were made of twisted sinew or babiche, which is thinly sliced rawhide.

How was it used?

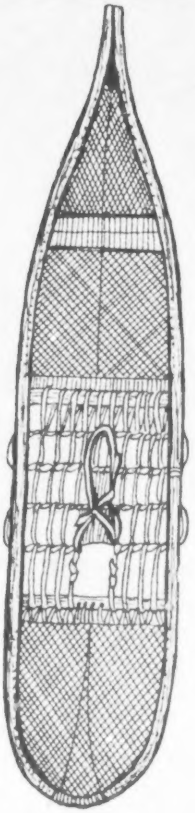
Small snares, like the one pictured above, were used to catch many kinds of small game such as rabbits and spruce hens. They were placed along animal trails. Heavier snares were used inside caribou surrounds. Snares were also sometimes part of a more complicated trap or deadfall.

Who used it?

Men, women, and children all knew how and where to set certain kinds of snares. Men usually set the snares for large animals like caribou or moose.

When was it used?

Mostly during the winter.



SNOWSHOES

Where were they used?

Throughout Alaska.

What were they made of?

The frames were made of birch wood. The lacing was made of babiche, which is thinly sliced rawhide.

Who made them?

Men made the frame and either men or women did the lacing.

How were they used?

Snowshoes were used both in hunting game and in traveling for any distance away from camp.

There were two kinds of snowshoes. The long ones, sometimes 5 feet long, were for hunting. Men used these when they had to travel on fresh snow. The shorter snowshoes were used when people traveled on well-packed trails.

Who used them?

Everyone: men, women, and children.

When were they used?

Winter.